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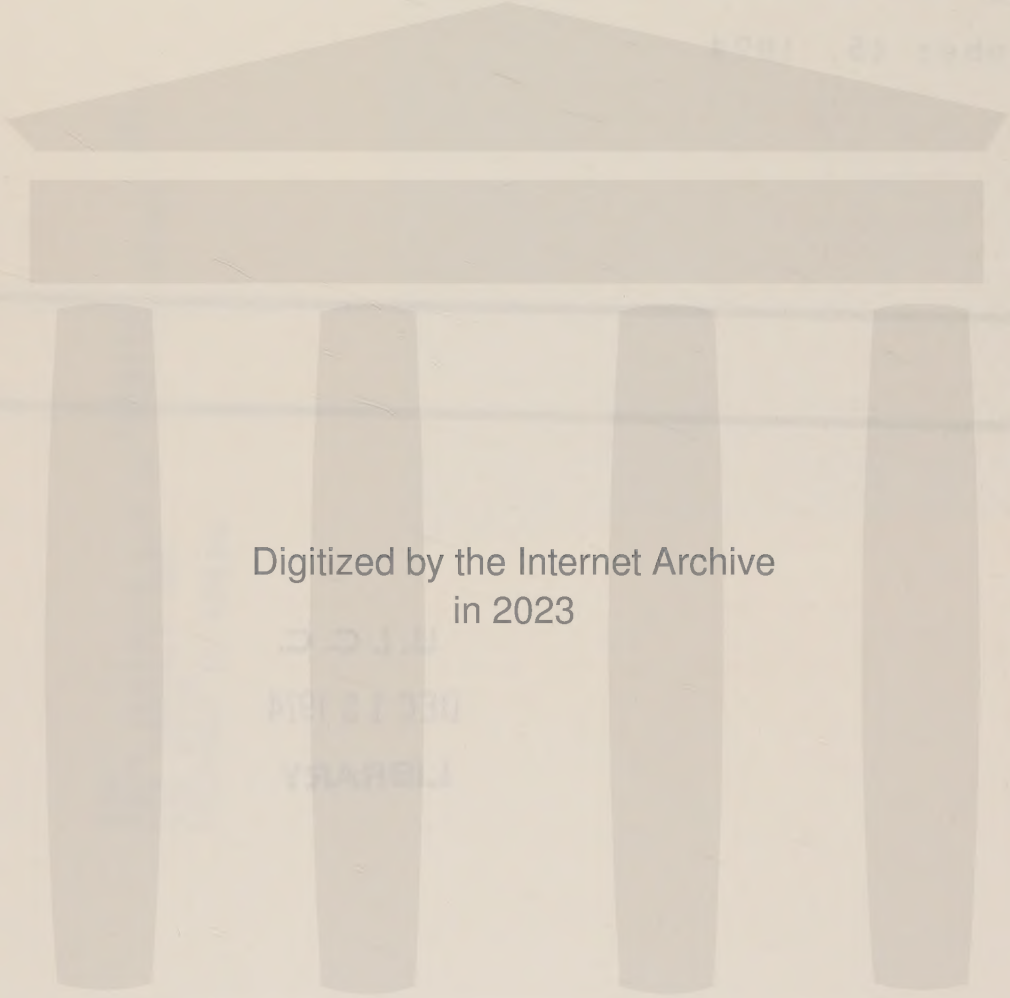

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American Consulate General
Hong Kong, B.C.C.

No. 793
October 15, 1974

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The Struggle between Two Military Lines During the War To Liberate the Northeast

- Critique of Lin Piao's Right military line during the war to liberate the Northeast

by

Yü Hsüeh-chün (余学军)

(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an [Study and Criticism], No. 9, Sept. 20, 1974)

Chairman Mao teaches us: "Correct political and military lines do not emerge and develop spontaneously and tranquilly, but only in the course of struggle. It is necessary to fight against 'Left' opportunism on the one hand and against Right opportunism on the other. Without struggling against and thoroughly overcoming these harmful tendencies which endanger the revolution and revolutionary war, it will be impossible to build up the correct line and win the victory in revolutionary war." The victory of the people's war of liberation in the Northeast theater during the period of the Third Revolutionary Civil War was won after Chairman Mao's Marxist-Leninist line had defeated Lin Piao's Right opportunist line; it was the result of the thorough implementation of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and rejection of Lin Piao's Right-deviating line by the army and people in the Northeast.

I

With the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japan, the contradiction between US imperialism and its running dogs, the Kuomintang reactionaries, and the Chinese people rose to be the main contradiction in Chinese society. The Chinese people's democratic revolution entered a new historical epoch. The struggle between the new China of the masses of people led by the proletariat and the semi-colonial, semi-feudal old China under the dictatorship of the big landlord and big bourgeois classes constituted the basic content of class struggle in this period. This struggle reflected within the Party became the struggle between Chairman Mao's Marxist-Leninist line and the Right opportunist line upheld by Liu Shao-ch'i, Lin Piao and the like. Way back to the eve of the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japan, Chairman Mao had at the 7th Party Congress formulated for our Party the political line of "boldly mobilizing the masses, expanding the strength of the people, and defeating the aggressors and building up a new China under our Party's leadership." Then, in the situation where the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries, taking advantage of their military superiority, arrogantly launched a counter-revolutionary civil war on an unprecedented scale, Chairman Mao, in view of the Right pessimistic idea of fearing US imperialism existing both inside and outside the Party, put forward the great thesis that "all reactionaries are paper tigers." This ideologically armed the whole Party and the people of the whole country. Calling on the people to wage a "tit-for-tat, seizing every inch of land" struggle against the US-Chiang reactionaries, he pointed out resolutely: "Not only must we

defeat Chiang Kai-shek, but we are able to do so." Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the whole Party and the people of the whole country unleashed an uncompromising struggle against the enemy, displaying the heroic spirit of daring to struggle and to win.

Lin Piao, besides being afraid of the US-Chiang military offensives, had great illusions about the enemy's political deception. In the Northeast he pushed a Right opportunist line. Barely after the conclusion of the War of Resistance Against Japan, Chairman Mao already foresaw the Northeast region as a vital theater for the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, and with great foresight he set the strategic policy of seizing and controlling the Northeast. To this end, the Party Central Committee despatched large numbers of cadres and troops from the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia border region and the various base areas in Central and North China into the Northeast to mobilize the masses, establish base areas and further expand the people's army in active preparations for smashing the enemy's attacks. In December 1945, Chairman Mao issued an important directive "Build Stable Base Areas in the Northeast," in which he pointed out explicitly: "Our Party's present task in the Northeast is to build base areas.....the regions in which to build stable base areas are the cities and vast rural areas comparatively remote from the centers of Kuomintang occupation." In addition, Chairman Mao laid down a correct policy for building base areas and crushing the enemy's offensives, pointing out in unmistakable terms: our army should "leave the high road alone and seize the land on both sides," "mobilize all forces and swiftly undertake the great struggle to build base areas." Our army was required "to smash the Kuomintang attacks in western Manchuria and Jehol resolutely and in a planned way. In eastern and northern Manchuria we should quickly prepare the conditions for smashing the Kuomintang attacks."

However, Lin Piao, proceeding from his reactionary stand as a bourgeois careerist and faced with armed attacks by the US-Chiang reactionaries, dared not give tit for tat. Instead of opposing counter-revolutionary war with revolutionary war, he dreamed of "peaceful cooperation" with the Kuomintang reactionaries in the Northeast. He refused to carry out Chairman Mao's directive on building stable base areas in the Northeast and smashing the attacks by the Chiang troops; on the contrary, he was keen on joining P'eng Te-huai in vigorously pushing in the Northeast Liu Shao-ch'i's capitulationist line of "a new stage of peace and democracy," clamoring for "enabling the Northeast and the whole country to embark on a new stage of peace and democracy." Spreading peace illusions everywhere, he advocated the parliamentary road, saying that "it is necessary to prepare to shift from armed struggle to the non-military mass and parliamentary struggle." Professing his "willingness to cooperate with the Kuomintang in the Northeast region," he said that it was necessary to quickly concentrate cadres and prepare forces "to join in various capacities the government and the leading organs of political, economic, military, cultural and mass institutions considered legal by the Kuomintang" and to "build up the country in cooperation" with the Kuomintang. Lin Piao even went so far as to suggest that the army led by our Party should be "nationalized" in preparation for selling the people's army to the Kuomintang. For this

reason, he procrastinated in executing Chairman Mao's directive "Build Stable Areas in the Northeast," refrained from placing the center of gravity of work in the cities and vast rural areas comparatively remote from the centers of enemy occupation, and refrained from mobilizing the peasants or building base areas. This completely laid bare the capitulationist line practiced politically by Lin Piao.

The struggle between two political lines is bound to be reflected in the military field as a struggle between two military lines. In the directive "Build Stable Areas in the Northeast," Chairman Mao laid down clearcut stipulations regarding the military tasks and operational principles for our army in the Northeast. Following the outbreak of the full-scale civil war, Chairman Mao further elaborated on the strategic policies of our army in a series of important directives including "Smash Chiang Kai-shek's Offensive by a War of Self-Defense," "Concentrate a Superior Force To Destroy the Enemy Forces One by One" and "A Three Months' Summary." He proposed that the People's War of Liberation should "take the annihilation of the effective strength of the enemy forces, and not the holding or seizing of places, as the main objective." In order to wipe out the enemy forces, it was necessary to carry out the operational principle of "concentrating a superior force to destroy the enemy forces one by one." In every battle a superior force several times that of the enemy should be concentrated to encircle the enemy completely and wipe him out lock, stock and barrel. For our army, "the method of fighting is generally mobile warfare." The Liberation Army in the Northeast, following Chairman Mao's concept of operations, fought bravely, wiping out large numbers of Kuomintang troops and winning tremendous victories.

But Lin Piao, proceeding from his Right opportunist political line, interfered with and sabotaged Chairman Mao's strategic policies. He countered the policy of active defense with passive defense, retreat and flight. He opposed the policy of mobile warfare with positional warfare. He opposed the operational principle of waging battles of annihilation with battles of routing the enemy and battles of attrition. When the People's War of Liberation began, a people's army of 300,000 men had been formed in the Northeast theater. In the winter of 1945, when Chiang Kai-shek's troops landed on Ch'inhuangtao and began to push toward the Northeast, they had only the strength of two armies. Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee time and again ordered Lin Piao to concentrate our armed forces and wipe out the enemy troops in large numbers while they were still on the run. But Lin Piao repeatedly ignored Chairman Mao's and the Party Central Committee's orders, and instead passively avoided fighting, thus losing opportune moments to destroy the enemy. As a result, the enemy was able to take Shanhaikuan and Chinchow that had already been liberated. Subsequently, when the Kuomintang was pouring more troops into the Northeast to launch a large-scale offensive, Lin Piao once more violated Chairman Mao's concept of operations by dispersing his troops around and putting up defense works everywhere. Moreover, he kept his troops in the cities and on the main lines of communications. Without the support of base areas, he used the main force to deal with the enemy's main force, waging a battle of attrition with the enemy. Due to Lin Piao's errors in command, the battle to defend Ssup'ing in the summer of

1946 failed to produce the desired results, and in the end we had to withdraw from that city after losing a part of our effective strength. At this time, Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee had many times ordered Lin Piao to take control of the line from Changchun to Harbin and concentrate the armed forces to win one or two battles in order to wipe out large numbers of the enemy while they were on the run. But, Lin Piao, who claimed to be an "invincible general," was seized with panic and turned from recklessness in defense to flightism in retreat. He lightly gave up Changchun and ran to the north of the Sungari River, withdrawing from more than 300 kilometers toward the north in about ten days' time and losing quite a number of small and medium-sized cities and rural areas. He even attempted to blow up the Sungari Bridge and abandon Harbin. It was only after Chairman Mao and the Military Commission of the Central Committee repeatedly criticized him severely and time and again emphasized the need to hold Harbin and preserve the region north of the Sungari River that his flightism was checked and the war situation in the Northeast was stabilized.

Subsequently, as Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee firmly corrected Lin Piao's Right opportunist line and as the army and people in the Northeast seriously carried out Chairman Mao's directive "Build Stable Base Areas in the Northeast" and a series of principles of operations, cadres by the thousands and a part of the main force went deep into the rural areas to extensively mobilize the masses, unfold the land reform, exterminate the local armed bandits, set up people's governments at various levels, and step up the building of the army. Moreover, in the summer offensive of 1947, more than 80,000 enemy troops were put out of action. This quickly reversed the situation in the Northeast, and a solid foundation was laid for the future shift to strategic offensive. This was a victory achieved by the army and people of the Northeast who thoroughly executed Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

II

After more than a year of strategic defense and fighting on the interior lines, the People's War of Liberation smashed the attacks of the Kuomintang army. At this time, the moment for the great historic turning point for the shift from strategic defense to strategic offense in the Chinese people's revolutionary war had arrived. In this new situation, whether or not we dared to stage a strategic offensive and use our main forces to fight our way out to exterior lines and launch large-scale attacks on the Kuomintang-ruled areas had become a key issue of the struggle between two military lines within the Party. At a time when the revolution and war were entering a new stage, the Right opportunists within the Party would invariably come out and attempt to obstruct the wheel of history--the revolutionary war--from rolling forward. Such an extremely inglorious role was exactly played by Lin Piao at a time when the War of Liberation was changing in the direction of strategic offense.

In the early period of the war, the enemy's army was in the position of strategic offense while our army was in that of strategic defense.

Under Chairman Mao's correct leadership and command, our army smashed the full-scale attacks by Chiang Kai-shek after eight months of fighting. The enemy's army could only launch the so-called concentrated attacks from the two flanks of the southern line, namely, Shantung and northern Shensi. But such concentrated attacks were also smashed by our army quickly. When the first year of the war was over, our army had wiped out 97½ brigades of the enemy's regular army and his irregular troops, totalling 1,120,000 men, while our own regular army had developed from 1,200,000 to 1,950,000 men. "This victory dealt the enemy a heavy blow, created profound defeatism in the whole enemy camp, elated the people throughout the country and laid the foundation for the complete annihilation of the enemy by our army and for final victory." This momentous change in the war situation compelled the enemy to turn from strategic offense to strategic defense while our army shifted from strategic defense to strategic offense.

With great foresight and correctly weighing the time and situation, the great leader Chairman Mao led the whole Party and the whole army to promptly effect the shift from strategic defense to strategic offense. Before and after the start of the strategic offense, Chairman Mao wrote a succession of directives and commentaries including "Greet the New High Tide of the Chinese Revolution" and "The Chiang Kai-shek Government Is Besieged by the Whole People," pointing out clearly: "The situation in China is about to develop to a new stage. This new stage will be one in which the country-wide struggle against imperialism and feudalism will develop into a great new people's revolution." Moreover, he appealed to the people throughout the country to swiftly prepare all necessary conditions for building a new China. In "Manifesto of the Chinese People's Liberation Army," he issued the great call, "Overthrow Chiang Kai-shek, liberate all China," a call which became the general slogan for the strategy of the Chinese revolution at the stage of strategic offense at the time.

Chairman Mao's great call and the rapid development of the revolutionary situation gained the cheers and support of the whole Party and the people of the whole country, while causing consternation and anxieties among the Right opportunists. Lin Piao did his utmost to deny the development and changes of the situation and vigorously spread pessimistic views in the Northeast region. Right before and after the start of the strategic offensive, Lin Piao at one moment shouted aloud: "The enemy in the Northeast has strong combat effectiveness and is difficult to deal with." At another moment, he said alarmingly: "The enemy forces are formidable, have abundant supplies and superior equipment, and they have been trained for a long time," and our army "cannot always wage large-scale campaigns and battles of annihilation." He openly exaggerated Chiang Kai-shek's military forces that were strong outwardly but weak inwardly. In Lin Piao's eyes, there was no such fact as that the situation in which the enemy was strong and we were weak was being turned into one in which the enemy was weak and we were strong, it was an impossibility to wipe out large numbers of the enemy, and it was a dangerous attempt to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek. There was only one way

out, that is, we should accept his plan: "In the future coalition government" "he (meaning Chiang Kai-shek) should have a share." Even up to that moment Lin Piao had not forgotten to enter into a "partnership" with the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries, showing that he had the same interests as this enemy of the people and was to live and die with him.

In matters of military strategy and operations, Lin Piao sang a tune entirely different from that sung by the Party Central Committee. When the strategic offensive began in the People's War of Liberation, Chairman Mao promptly issued the important directive "Strategy for the Second Year of the War of Liberation," in which he laid down the strategic policy for our army as follows: "To launch a country-wide counter-offensive, that is, to use our main forces to fight our way to exterior lines, carry the war into the Kuomintang areas, wipe out large numbers of the enemy on the exterior lines....Use a portion of our main forces and large numbers of our regional troops to continue fighting on interior lines, wipe out the enemy there and recover lost territory." Acting on the strategic plan laid down by Chairman Mao, the People's Liberation Army launched a country-wide offensive from July to September 1947. The Shansi-Hopei-Shantung-Honan Field Army forced the Yellow River in southwestern Shantung on June 30, crossed the Lunghai Railway early in August and thrust into the Tapieh Mountains. The Taiyueh Army of the Shansi-Hopei-Shantung-Honan Field Army forded the Yellow River from southern Shansi in late August and thrust into western Honan. The Eastern China Field Army thrust into southwestern Shantung early in September after smashing a concentrated attack by the enemy. In the same month the Shantung Army of the Eastern China Field Army started an offensive against the enemy in eastern Shantung. The Northwest Field Army went over to the offensive in late August. The Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Field Army started an offensive against the enemy along the northern section of the Peiping-Hankow Railway early in September. All this indicated that the People's War of Liberation had already gone over to country-side strategic offensive and carried the main theater of the war into Kuomintang-controlled areas. "This is a historic turning point, one that will lead to the destruction of Chiang Kai-shek's counter-revolutionary rule developed over 20 years. This is a turning point marking the process from the development of imperialist rule in China to its extinction over more than a century."

Yet in such a great turn of events, Lin Piao adopted the Right opportunist stand and attitude. On the eve of the strategic offensive, our army on the southern line was carrying out a struggle to smash the enemy's concentrated attacks. In the liberated areas of the Northeast at this time, land reform was being extensively carried out under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. The broad masses of people were enthusiastically joining the army and giving support to the front. Our main forces were expanded and regional troops were reinforced. The revolutionary situation had developed considerably. Under this situation, the Liberation Army in the Northeast, whose morale had risen still higher, strongly called for an offensive against the enemy. There were at that time all the necessary conditions for concentrating our forces to fight

several large battles of annihilation, to tie down more of the enemy by active operations, and in coordination with fighting in other war zones, to smash the enemy's concentrated attacks and contribute to the preparations for the strategic counter-attack. However, Right-deviating and conservative-minded, Lin Piao ignored the general situation and passively avoided fighting. And when the strategic offensive had begun and the People's Liberation Army in other theaters was attacking furiously, Lin Piao made up all sorts of "excuses" to deceive the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission, saying that "the enemy's military forces are concentrated, and there is no good target for me to fight" and "it happens to be the rainy season....operations are impossible." Unilaterally he decided to have the main forces in the Northeast rest and consolidate. The three months of July, August and September of 1947 were crucial months for our army to launch the strategic counter-offensive, yet Lin Piao did not put his troops into action and in nearly three months failed to organize offensive operations. In this period, according to incomplete statistics, the Shansi-Hopei-Shantung-Honan Field Army wiped out a total of more than 60,000 enemy troops and recovered 24 county towns. The Taiyueh Army, fording the River and thrusting south late in August, wiped out more than 10,000 enemy troops and recovered 20 county towns in one month. The Eastern China Field Army wiped out more than 40,000 enemy troops and recovered 17 county towns. The Northern China, Northwest and other field armies also wiped out over 1,500 enemy troops and recovered eleven county towns during the counter-offensive. Although the large numbers of commanders and fighters of the Northeast Field Army asked to fight, Lin Piao turned them down, and in two and a half months only two county towns were liberated and one enemy regiment was put out of action. Lin Piao's refusal to coordinate with our army's counter-attacks and offensives in other theaters and his sabotage of Chairman Mao's great strategic dispositions were dictated by his opportunist stand. Had battle been fought in the Northeast at that time, Chiang Kai-shek, who looked upon the Northeast theater as the root of his life, would surely have brought in more troops from the Shanhaikuan area as reinforcements, and our army in that region would surely have been able to launch the attacks more boldly and wipe out a greater number of the enemy more quickly. The broad masses of commanders and fighters of our army in the Northeast actively asked to make such contributions to the nation-wide War of Liberation, yet Lin Piao regarded this as a "burden," and he was neither willing nor dared to take up the task of rendering support to the nation-wide war. He feared the enemy like he feared the tiger and enriched himself at the expense of others. While letting others fight the enemy, he himself sat high on the Ch'angpai Mountains and watched the "fire." He did not come out to join the fray until he saw there was something to be gained. Such was the essence of Lin Piao's reactionary military thinking.

Chairman Mao severely criticized Lin Piao for his Right opportunist stand of passively avoiding fighting. In May and October 1947, Chairman Mao clearly ordered him to lead the main force to march south toward the Peiping-Liaoning and Peiping-Suiyuan Railways to fight. In December the same year, the Party Central Committee transmitted to him a telegram from

the leading comrades of the Taiyueh Army, and criticized his Right-deviating errors. Then, the Right opportunist ideas within the Party were more incisively criticized in such important articles as "The Present Situation and Our Tasks," "On Some Important Problems of the Party's Present Policy," and "On the Great Victory in the Northwest and On the New Type of Ideological Education Movement in the Liberation Army." Chairman Mao stressed: "We should eliminate all ideas of feebleness and incompetence within our own ranks. All viewpoints of over-estimating the strength of the enemy and under-estimating that of the people are wrong." Moreover, discoursing profoundly on the opposition to Right opportunism as the prerequisite for unfolding the strategic offensive, he pointed out: "Provided we firmly oppose conservatism, fear of the enemy and fear of difficulties, and provided we follow the general strategy of the Central Committee of the Party and its directive on the ten major principles of operation, we can unfold our offensives and wipe out vast numbers of enemy troops." It was precisely because Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee had firmly criticized Right opportunism and stamped out Lin Piao's interference that the war to liberate the Northeast was insured of continuous progress and in the winter of 1947 up to the spring of the following year major victories were won in the winter offensive, preparing the conditions for the strategically decisive engagements in the Northeast theater.

III

When the People's War of Liberation entered its third year, the moment for strategically decisive battles by our army had arrived. Under this situation, whether or not we dared to engage the Kuomintang army decisively in a strategic sense, and how to conduct such strategically decisive battles, became the focal point of the struggle between Chairman Mao's proletarian military line and Lin Piao's bourgeois military line.

Our army's strategically decisive engagements were conducted under the guidance of Chairman Mao's strategic thinking. In a series of important writings including "On the September Meeting - Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," "The Momentous Changes in China's Military Situation," "The Concept of Operations for the Liaohsi-Shenyang Campaign," "The Concept of Operations for the Huai-Hai Campaign" and "The Concept of Operations for the Peiping-Tientsin Campaign," Chairman Mao not only formulated for our army the general task and general policy for the strategically decisive engagements but also laid down separate correct operational principles for the three major campaigns. In September 1948, he laid down the general task for our Party in the military field as follows: "Build a People's Liberation Army of five million in a period of about five years (beginning from July 1946), wipe out a total of some 500 brigades (divisions) of the enemy's regular forces (an average of about 100 brigades a year), wipe out a total of some 7,500,000 men of his regular and irregular forces and of the special arms (an average of about 1,500,000 men a year), and overthrow the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang completely." In November the same year, in light of the changed military situation, Chairman Mao pointed out further: "As we now see it, only another year or so may be

needed to overthrow the reactionary Kuomintang government completely." This strategic plan put forward by Chairman Mao was the outcome of the struggle against Right opportunism, an expression in the military field of the proletarian strategic thinking of daring to make revolution and to win.

A strategically decisive battle was a step of decisive significance to the realization of the above-mentioned strategic objective of our Party. To oppose Right opportunism and speed up the pace of the Chinese revolution, Chairman Mao decided to start the strategically decisive battle in the fall of 1948. At that time, the War of Liberation was entering its third year. In the previous two years, our army had wiped out 2,640,000 enemy troops, thereby further weakening the enemy's military strength and forcing him to change from general defense to concentrated defense. Engulfed by defeatist moods, the factional contradictions within the enemy camp were further accentuated. Struggles waged by the people of the Chiang-controlled areas against the Chiang Kai-shek government rose like storms, and the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang was crumbling. In the struggle, our people's revolutionary strength was growing steadily. The total strength of our army had amounted to 2,800,000 men, and there was a substantial rise in its morale and in the level of modern military technology. On the other hand, the Kuomintang army had gone down to 3,600,000 men, of whom only some 1,700,000 men were deployed on the first line. The liberated areas had been extended to cover one-fourth of the country's total area and over one-third of the country's population. However, the enemy's army was still stronger than the Liberation Army in numbers. The enemy was still ruling three-fourths of the country with two-thirds of the population. Under this situation, whether or not we dared to fight battles larger than those our army had fought before, whether or not we dared to attack the enemy's big cities, whether or not we dared to annihilate the enemy's powerful army groups, and whether or not we dared to win still greater victories - this had become a major problem in strategic planning facing our army at that time. And at that time, the Kuomintang, at its Nanking Military Conference of August 1948 had proposed to withdraw from the Northeast, hold on to the Central Plains, defend Shenyang till the end of October, and in principle not to give up Shenyang. At the same time, it made operational plans in preparation for the withdrawal. Under this military situation, should we allow the enemy to pull back strategically, withdraw his main forces to the Shanhaikuan area or south of the Yangtze, thereby depriving ourselves of opportune moments and adding to the difficulties of future fighting? Or, should we make the decision forthwith to organize a strategically decisive battle and wipe out the powerful army groups of the enemy one by one before he had decided to bolt? The opportunity must not be missed, and once lost, would never return. With the great spirit of a proletarian revolutionary, Chairman Mao once again broke the conventional military rules and, at a time when our total military strength was less than that of the enemy, determinedly grasped the moment for strategically decisive engagements, and personally led and commanded the three major campaigns - the Liaohsi-Shenyang, Huai-Hai and Peiping-Tientsin campaigns.

Just when the great moment for the strategically decisive engagements was fast approaching, Lin Piao once more exposed his shameful features as a Right opportunist. He always over-estimated the strength of the enemy. He was blind to the strength of our army and of the masses of the people. He dared not launch the strategically decisive engagements, nor did he dare to fight a large-scale battle of annihilation without precedent. In the two major campaigns--the Liaohsi-Shenyang and Peiping-Tientsin campaigns--Lin Piao again and again interfered with and sabotaged Chairman Mao's strategic policies. Victories were won in these two big campaigns only because Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee had firmly rectified Lin Piao's errors and defeated his Right opportunist line.

In light of the military situation in the whole country as well as in the Northeast, Chairman Mao decided to start with the Liaohsi-Shenyang campaign for the strategically decisive engagements. At that time the enemy was strategically attempting to prolong as far as possible the defense of several isolated cities in the Northeast and pin down our army in the Northeast from entering the Shanhaikuan area to fight; at the same time, he was preparing to withdraw his troops in the Northeast to the Central China region. Had our army first pointed the direction of the strategically decisive engagements to the North China theater, it would have been subject to attack from two sides by the two big army groups under Fu Tso-i and Wei Li-huang and placed in a passive position. Had it first pointed the direction of the decisive engagements to the East China theater, the enemy forces in the Northeast would have been enabled to withdraw quickly and achieve the strategic pull-back. For this reason, the Northeast theater became crucial to the development of the military situation of the country as a whole. And in the Northeast theater our army enjoyed superiority not only in quality but also in numbers. The base areas in the Northeast had been linked together and economically occupied the primary position among the various liberated areas in the whole country. Our army in the Northeast already had a main force of 700,000 men, and there were 300,000 regional troops. The Kuomintang, on the other hand, had only some 480,000 regular troops, separately holding on to the three isolated areas of Changchun, Shenyang and Chinchow. It was entirely possible for our army to wipe out the enemy troops in the Northeast on the spot. In this way, it would be possible not only to smash the attempt of the enemy forces to pull back toward the Shanhaikuan area but also to enable our army in the Northeast to turn into the Shanhaikuan area to fight. Therefore, Chairman Mao's decision to start the strategically decisive engagements in the Northeast was a good move of tremendous significance, a move he made after a survey of the entire strategic situation. However, on this only theater - the Northeast theater - where our army got the upper hand in military strength, Lin Piao did not dare to wage a strategically decisive battle. He retained the main force in the Changchun area and opposed going south to fight on the Peiping-Liaoning Railway; in essence he was afraid of starting the strategically decisive engagements in the Northeast and sabotaged Chairman Mao's great strategic dispositions.

According to Chairman Mao's strategic principles, the central link of the Liaohsi-Shenyang campaign was to concentrate the main force of our army along the line of Chinchow, Shanhaikuan and Tangshan, and, in particular, to take Chinchow as quickly as possible. At the various points along the section from Chinchow to Shanhaikuan, the enemy forces were isolated and dispersed, so there was a greater measure of certainty in wiping them out and winning the victory. The capture of Chinchow would make it possible to block the escape of the enemy troops back to the Shanhaikuan area, and thus would be favorable to wiping out one by one the enemy forces isolated in Changchun and Shenyang. Moreover, by luring the enemy forces at Changchun and Shenyang to come to its rescue, our army might "attack Chinchow and beat the reinforcements," thereby wiping out the enemy reinforcements while they were on the move. Meanwhile, it would also be possible to effect a breakthrough in the center, isolating the two army groups under Wei Li-huang and Fu Tso-i from each other as well as taking control of the Peiping-Liaoning Railway, which would facilitate our army's mobile operations toward the two flanks in the future. Therefore, in his directives to Lin Piao, Chairman Mao particularly stressed the need to "be firmly determined to attack and capture Chinchow, Shanhaikuan and Tangshan and to take control of the entire line." However, Lin Piao was extremely afraid of annihilating the enemy forces in the Northeast on the spot; on the contrary, he vainly attempted to let them escape. On the eve of the campaign, he insisted on using the main force for an attack on Changchun, but actually he dared not really attack Changchun and refused to carry out Chairman Mao's operational principle of marching south to the Peiping-Liaoning Railway to lock up the Chiang troops in the Northeast and wipe them out one by one there. On this, Chairman Mao and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee criticized him many times. On September 7, Chairman Mao again emphasized to Lin Piao the policy of "leaving the enemy at Changchun and Shenyang alone and focusing your attention on the enemy at Chinchow, Shanhaikuan and Tangshan." Following Chairman Mao's repeated criticisms, Lin Piao was finally obliged to deploy his forces and take them south from the Changchun area early in September.

Even after fighting on the Peiping-Liaoning Railway had erupted, Lin Piao still stayed in Harbin without making up his mind to capture Chinchow. And when arrangements had been completed for the attack on Chinchow, he opposed Chairman Mao's operational principle of capturing Chinchow and annihilating the whole army group under Fan Han-chieh. At one moment he wanted to attack Chengte and Shanhaikuan and at another he wanted to transfer the main force for an attack on Changchun. These erroneous propositions were sternly curbed in time by order of Chairman Mao and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee. After the attack on Chinchow had begun, Lin Piao still took a grave view of the strength of the enemy on the southern line, had a lot of worries, wavered and hesitated. Thereupon, Chairman Mao sent him more telegrams warning him again and again not to waver but to make up his mind to "strive to take Chinchow within one week." Thanks to Chairman Mao's wise command and the correction of Lin Piao's mistakes, our army liberated Chinchow on October 15. At that time, the enemy forces which entrenched in the Shenyang area or

had advanced to Liaohsi were prepared to flee. But since the Peiping-Liaoning line had been cut off by our army, Yingkow became the only route for the enemy to escape to the Shanhaikuan area. In order to seal off this passage and wipe out all the enemy forces in the Northeast on the spot, Chairman Mao at one time or another despatched seven urgent telegrams to Lin Piao ordering him to use sufficient forces to block the escape of the enemy to the south and to take control of Yingkow quickly. However, Lin Piao, ignoring Chairman Mao's directive, did not send troops to block the gap at Yingkow, with the result that one army, one division and three regiments of the enemy were able to escape to the sea through Yingkow.

The great victory of the Liaohsi-Shenyang campaign was won under Chairman Mao's command. The whole of the Northeast was liberated, and some 470,000 enemy troops were wiped out. At this moment basic changes had occurred in the balance of strength between the enemy and our forces. The total strength of the enemy forces had been reduced to some 2 million men, while our army had grown to 3 million men. "The People's Liberation Army, long superior in quality, has now become superior in numbers as well." In view of this major change in the military situation, Chairman Mao called on the whole Party and the people of the whole country to step up the march and fight for "building a united, democratic people's republic throughout the country." To this end, Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee resolved to start the Peiping-Tientsin campaign immediately.

At that time the enemy forces in the North China theater had been shaken by the victories won by our army in the Liaohsi-Shenyang and Huai-Hai campaigns. They were like birds startled by the mere twang of a bow-string. Entrenched along the line of Changchiakou, Peiping, Tientsin and Tangku, they attempted to flee south by sea or westward to Suiyuan. Therefore, whether or not we were able to tie down the enemy and prevent him from escape became a key question for our army to wipe him out on the spot. Under this situation, the central issue of the struggle between two military lines in the Peiping-Tientsin campaign was whether to promptly complete the strategic encirclement of the enemy forces in North China and cut them up tactically so as to wipe out all of them on the spot or to delay in taking the strategically decisive engagements and allow them to escape to the south or flee to the west.

In order to wipe out all the enemy forces in North China, Chairman Mao made a series of wise decisions. He ordered our army in the Northeast to enter secretly into the Shanhaikuan area at the highest speed, proceed to eastern Hopei from Jehol, first encircle the enemy forces in Tientsin, Tangku, Lutai and Tangshan and cut off the retreat of the enemy to the south by sea. He instructed two armies in North China to concentrate their main forces on the Peiping-Suiyuan Railway, encircle separately the enemy forces in Changchiakou and Hsinpao-an, cut off the retreat of the enemy to the west, and temporarily postpone the attack on the enemy in Hsinpao-an so as to lure the enemy in Peiping and Tientsin and make it difficult for him to come to a decision to flee by sea.

Besides, he made corresponding arrangements for our forces at the Huai-Hai and Taiyuan fronts in order to benumb the enemy in Peiping and Tientsin. By carrying out these directives of Chairman Mao's, our army would take the enemy by surprise and enforce the strategic encirclement of his forces in North China and cut them apart tactically, thus putting them to death and greatly shortening the victorious course of the strategically decisive engagements and the revolutionary war as a whole.

However, Lin Piao had no desire at all to wipe out all the enemy forces in North China on the spot; instead, he vainly attempted to allow them to escape to the south. Proceeding from this, he time and again opposed Chairman Mao's strategic dispositions and operational principles regarding the Peiping-Tientsin campaign. When the Liaohsi-Shenyang campaign had just ended, Chairman Mao had already instructed our main forces in the Northeast to enter the Shanhaikuan area at an early date and surround Tientsin, Tangku and Tangshan. But Lin Piao delayed in taking action on various excuses and vainly attempted to let the enemy forces in Peiping and Tientsin escape. It was only after Chairman Mao and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee had so ordered him again and again that Lin Piao grudgingly agreed to deploy the main forces of the Northeast and enter the Shanhaikuan area. Chairman Mao instructed our army in the Northeast not to enter the Shanhaikuan area by way of Shanhaikuan but to proceed to eastern Hopei from Jehol in covert and speedy operations. Lin Piao, however, ordered the last three armies to advance via Shanhaikuan, thus revealing the military secret in an attempt to frighten the enemy forces in Peiping and Tientsin into escape. Chairman Mao had clearly provided that at the first stage of the campaign we should first encircle Tientsin, Tangku and Tangshan and together with our North China army which was rapidly driving toward Changchiakou and Hsinpao-an, accomplish the strategic encirclement of the enemy forces in Peiping, Tientsin and Changchiakou, cutting them apart tactically--this was to "cut off without encircling" and to "encircle without attacking" "in order to wait for the completion of our dispositions and then wipe out the enemy forces one by one." However, Lin Piao made the erroneous proposal of attacking the enemy forces in Nankow in an attempt to drive the enemy forces east of Nankow to Tientsin and Tangku. In short, during the Peiping-Tientsin campaign Lin Piao's Right opportunist thinking was further exposed; he opposed strategically decisive engagements, dared not wipe out the enemy, and allowed him to escape south. It was only because Chairman Mao formulated an entirely correct policy for the Peiping-Tientsin campaign, adopted a series of effective measures and corrected Lin Piao's errors that the People's Liberation Army was able to win a great victory in the Peiping-Tientsin campaign.

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The history of the People's War of Liberation in the Northeast completely unmasked Lin Piao who claimed to be a "military genius," an "invincible general" and the "representative of a correct line." It

showed him up as an out-and-out Right opportunist. At the stage of strategic defense in the War of Liberation, he practiced military recklessness and flightism. When the War of Liberation shifted from strategic defense to strategid offense, he did not put his troops to action and practiced military conservatism. When the moment for strategically decisive engagements had arrived, he opposed such engagements and opposed Chairman Mao's strategic dispositions for overthrowing the reactionary Kuomintang government completely. Lin Piao's behavior at these crucial moments in the War of Liberation fully demonstrated that he was pushing a Right opportunist line.

A definite military line is decided by, and serves, a definite political line. The Right military line pushed by Lin Piao in the War of Liberation was an expression in the military field of his Right opportunist political line. Its criminal aim was essentially to oppose complete destruction of the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries, delay the victorious advance of the Chinese people's revolution, and obstruct the proletariat and the revolutionary people from seizing state power by force of arms. In doing so, he vainly tried to postpone the fall of the Chiang family dynasty and roll back the wheel of history. This line reflected the interests of the landlord-bourgeois classes and met the needs of US imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek. In the course of the Chinese People's War of Liberation, it was only because Chairman Mao's revolutionary line was dominant in the whole Party and the whole army and because the correct line had penetrated into the mind of the population that Lin Piao's conspiracy failed ultimately. Chairman Mao's correct leadership and the firm implementation of his directives by the army and people in the Northeast made the great victory in the war to liberate the Northeast possible. Today, under the excellent situation marked by the continuous deepening of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, to further criticize Lin Piao's Right opportunist line and bourgeois military thinking will help us understand better the ultra-Right essence of Lin Piao's counter-revolutionary revisionist line and adhere more consciously to Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line.

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Han Fei -- Chief Fighter Against Confucius in the Late Warring States Period

by

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(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an /Study and Criticism/, No. 9, Sept. 20, 1974)

Han Fei was a chief fighter in the anti-Confucius struggle in the late Warring States period. Among the Legalists representing the newly emerging landlord class, he was the first to criticize Confucius by name. "Han Fei Tzu," a work consisting of more than a hundred thousand characters, was a collection of essays written by him in criticism of Confucius during the acute struggle between the Confucian and Legalist schools. It was also a work that summed up the experience of struggle waged by the newly emerging landlord class against the declining slave-owning class. Even when we read it today, we may still feel a strong militant sense.

I

Han Fei (cir. 280 B.C.-233 B.C.) was a native of the state of Han in the late Warring States period, when Confucius had been dead for more than 200 years. Why did Han Fei make a concentrated, systematic attack on Confucius and his Confucian theories? To answer this question, we must begin with the background of the struggle between the landlord and slave-owning classes at that time.

The Warring States period was one of great social change. As a thinker of the newly emerging landlord class, Han Fei had on many occasions proposed to the King of Han adoption of the landlord class' line of "rule of law." However, resistance and opposition by agents of the slave-owning class operating in the political organs in the state of Han made the acceptance of his political views virtually impossible. There, "people holding power," namely, the slave-owning nobles, were despotic and rampant. They deceived those above and repressed those below. They formed gangs for selfish ends and vigorously fostered private forces. They could not be more arrogant. They adopted the bloody policy of openly suppressing or secretly murdering "people who were wise and capable" and "people well versed in law," namely, the Legalists. ("Those against whom false charges can be laid are condemned to death by public law; those who cannot be falsely accused die by the private sword." -- "Solitary Indignation, Han Fei Tzu") Therefore, the Legalists had no choice but to carry on their fight under extremely adverse circumstances. Class nature being what it was, Han Fei was unable to see the strength of the laboring people and always felt lonely and weak. But he did not become despondent, and with the feeling that "people who are wise and well-versed in law and people who hold power are enemies who cannot co-exist," unfolded an unyielding struggle against the slave-owning class.

Since his reform activities ran into numerous snags in the state of Han, Han Fei could not but pin on the state of Ch'in the hope of establishing a united, feudal regime throughout China. But at this time, the big slave-owner Lü Pu-wei had usurped power in the state of Ch'in through political speculative activities. A fanatical Confucius worshipper, Lü recruited a large group of "proteges" comprising mainly the Confucians and asked them to compile the "Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Lü," a pro-Confucian and anti-Legalist work advocating restoration of the old order, regression and division in preparing public opinion for the reinstitution of slavery in the state of Ch'in. The release of the "Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Lü" profoundly reflected the truth that while the attempt at restoration necessitated the worship of Confucius, the effort to thwart such an attempt must be accompanied by opposition to Confucius. Having summed up the historical experience of the Confucian-Legalist struggle since the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Han Fei was well aware that the Confucians were the major enemies of the newly emerging landlord, and that Confucianism was the "learning of a fool and imposter," ("Eminence in Learning") thereby drawing the incisive conclusion that "the Confucians with their learning bring confusion to the law." ("The Five Vermin") He did not hesitate to put the Confucians at the head of the "five vermin." Straightforwardly he denounced Confucius as the chief promoter of restoration, pronouncing in unmistakable terms: "The Confucians pay their highest respect to Confucius." ("Eminence in Learning") He was indeed the first person among the pre-Ch'in Legalists to criticize Confucius openly and by name. Besides, he sharply raised the Confucian-Legalist struggle to the level of the struggle between the two lines, stressing that "if those who uphold the law are strong, the state will be strong; if they are weak, the state will be weak." ("On Having Standards") As he pointed out, the key to whether a state is strong or weak lies in whether it firmly enforces the landlord class' line of "rule of law." It was precisely by starting from the need to consolidate the dictatorship of the landlord class that, filled with emotion, he wrote a series of outstanding criticize-Confucius articles, making an overall, systematic exposure and critique of Confucian theories and practices in restoring the old order. With great profundity he elaborated on the inevitable replacement of the slave system by the feudal system.

II

Han Fei was an expert on laying stress on the present and slighting the past. Carrying forward Hsün K'uang's theory of "imitating the later kings," he incisively criticized Confucius' conception of history in "imitating the early kings."

Should we "imitate the early kings" or "imitate the later kings"? This was at once the point of departure and the theoretical basis of the struggle between the two lines -- "rule of propriety" and "rule of law" -- in those days. To Confucius, the world dominated by the slave-owning aristocrats of Western Chou represented a "grand era," and King Wen of Chou was the most ideal "early king." He sighed: "The institutions of

the Chou dynasty are based on those of the Hsia and Shang dynasties; how thriving and complete they are! I must fight for the restoration of the slave system of the Chou dynasty." ("Chou had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations! I follow Chou--Pa I, Confucian Analects") There was no Confucian from Confucius to Mencius who did not open his mouth to "eulogize the way of the early kings" ("The Five Vermin") and do the best he could to extol "the formidable virtues of the early kings." ("Loyalty and Filial Piety") In short, in their eyes, things had gone from bad to worse generation after generation; everything ancient was good, everything of today was bad.

To shoot a man, you'll have to shoot his horse first; to catch the bandits, you'll have to capture their leader. Standing on a lofty position, Han Fei pointed out: As advocated by Confucius, the ways of Yao, Shun, T'ang and Wu, which were called ways of filial piety, brotherly love, loyalty and obedience, actually did not conform to the ways of filial piety, brotherly love, loyalty and obedience; on the contrary, they were "ways to bring confusion to the empire," hindering the establishment of the feudal ruling order. In addition, he relentlessly denounced the "sages" whom these Confucians adored, saying: "Yao, Shun, T'ang and Wu either went against the principles governing the relationship between the ruler and his subjects or conducted their government in such a way as to bring disorder to later ages." ("Loyalty and Filial Piety") His pen had the force of a thousand troops rolling up a mattress. Han Fei's contempt for Yao, Shun, T'ang and Wu fully demonstrated the vigorous spirit and militant character of the newly emerging landlord class of his time.

With a view to providing the theoretical basis for the reform cause of the newly emerging landlord class, Han Fei in the chapter "The Five Vermin" cited a host of facts of social change and historical development and explained eloquently the truth that "Past and present have different customs; new and old adopt different measures," affirming that developments from antiquity to the present day represented historical progress. He divided the development of history into four stages -- the high antiquity, the middle antiquity, the recent antiquity and the present period. He held that things improved generation after generation and not the other way round, pointing out specifically that "imitating early kings" was a regressive move. He said that if, by the Hsia dynasty, that is, after civilized society had come into being, there was anyone who, like the primitive men in the periods of ignorance and savagery, built his nest in trees and got fire by boring into wood, he would be laughed at by Kun and Yü, and that in the present age, if there was anyone who still exalted the ways of Yao, T'ang, Wen and Wu, he would surely be laughed at by the "new sages" of the landlord class. Han Fei acidly poked fun at those diehards who hankered after the past and stuck to the old rules, saying that if they "want to rule the people of the present day with the policies of the early kings," they would be as foolish as the "stump watchers."

There has never been any purely objective historical study. One's love and praise for or hatred for and denunciation of "early kings" are in fact a reflection of one's immediate political attitude. Han Fei pointed out: The purpose of the Confucians in "exalting the ways of the early kings" and "reading the writings of the ancients" was to "disrupt the order of the present age," ("Rape, Plunder and Slaying of Ministers") "thus casting doubt on the laws of the time and causing the ruler to be of two minds." ("The Five Vermin") In other words, they aimed at wrecking or weakening the dictatorship of the landlord class and shaking the ruler of the landlord class in his determination to practice the "rule of law." He made a graphic analogy, saying that this might be like someone who slandered his own father by praising the father of another. "For the ministers to frequently exalt the formidable virtues of the early kings" was aimed at "slandering the ruler" and "bringing confusion to the law of the later ages."

In view of the restorationist activities of the Confucians who used "early kings" to downgrade "later kings," Han Fei firmly put forward the idea of "imitating the new sages" and "praising the present." He justly sang the praises of the progressive cause of the newly emerging landlord class. This was extremely precious at that time. Although Han Fei passed away more than 2,000 years ago, the contention between the idea of stressing the past and slighting the present and that of stressing the present and slighting the past and between imitating early kings and imitating later kings has never ceased down to this day. Lin Piao and company countered Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius; this was an ugly performance by Confucius worshippers who had sneaked into the Party in "imitating the early kings." But the result was that like all political clowns in history who eulogized the past and derided the present and who did not come to a good end, Lin Piao and his diehard partners who moved against the tides of history met with an ignominious defeat.

III

As a thinker of the newly emerging landlord class, Han Fei publicly set forth the importance of strengthening the dictatorship of the landlord class while impressively criticizing and exposing the hypocritical and reactionary nature of Confucius' sermons on "benevolence and righteousness," "filial piety and brotherly love" and "government by virtue."

Confucius used to say: "He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn toward it." ("Wei Cheng, Confucian Analects") This meant that if we governed the state with benevolence, righteousness and virtue, we would have the support of the population, like all the stars turning toward the north polar star. By means of formal logic, Han Fei thoroughly refuted Confucius' fallacies about government by benevolence, righteousness and virtue. Han Fei said: You Confucius always spoke of Shun of ancient times influencing the peasants by personally

taking up the plow in the fields, influencing the fishermen by personally going for fishing, and influencing the masons by personally making pottery, and said that this exemplified "benevolence" and "the sage exercising virtue." But let us ask: Where was Yao at that time? If Yao had governed the world well, why then was there a need for Shun to influence people by exercising his virtue? Again: Since the world was so big and the population so large, and since Shun was only one person with a mortal life, how could he influence all the people at once? Such double talk of Confucius could not be proved by all. "(One Difficulty") Han Fei time and again stressed that Confucius' advocacy of "benevolence, righteousness, love and favor" would lead to the "defeat of the law" and the "destruction of the state." If his words had been followed, then "laws would be defeated and the country become unruly," resulting in its final extinction. ("Three Difficulties")

The Confucians in the late Warring States period were political swindlers who were extremly hypocritical and tricky. They went all out to publicize Confucius' "love of men" and Mencius' "benevolent government." ("Everyone of them speaks of benevolence, righteousness, love and favor" -- "Rape, Plunder and Slaying of Ministers") Everyone of them hoisted the banner of "pleading for the people," alleging that the early kings loved all men just as parents loved their own children. ("The ancient kings had universal love for the world and looked after the people as parents looked after a beloved child." -- "The Five Vermin") Such a tune of "benevolence and righteousness" sounds pleasing to the ear. But did they ever practice or had they ever prepared to practice these things? The answer is "no." Han Fei pointed out cogently: The "early kings," while sentencing people to death, shed tears. ("Whenever the minister of justice administered some punishment, the ruler would purposely cancel all musical performances; and whenever the ruler learned that the death sentence had been passed on someone, he would shed tears." -- "The Five Vermin") What a way to practice "benevolence." But, was the death penalty abolished after a few drops of tears were shed? No. People still had to die. Therefore, Confucius' saying that "there is no need to resort to killing in running a government" was practically a blank check.

As a matter of fact, in a class society are all classes treated on an equal basis by a "benevolent government"? As Confucius and Mencius saw it, "benevolent government" essentially meant fascist dictatorship by the slave-owning class. But because they were faced with the decline of the strength of the slave-owning class, they dared not openly state their own political intentions. What is false will always be false, and the guise will be stripped off. Confucius was a well-known pedlar of "benevolence and righteousness" in the world as Han Fei pointed out: "Confucius was one of the greatest sages of the world. He perfected his conduct, made clear the Way, and traveled throughout the area within the four seas, and in all that area people rejoiced in his benevolence." ("The Five Vermin") But actually, how many believed in him? Pitifully, "within the vast area of the world," only seventy men became his disciples, "and only one man -- he himself -- was truly benevolent and righteous." ("The Five Vermin") In other words, only Confucius himself truly believed in "benevolence and righteousness." A lonesome figure, he was in a sorry

plight. Therefore, Han Fei derided Confucius and his like for indulging in talk about benevolence and righteousness as if they were cooking a meal with mud, which looked nice but could not be eaten. They were merely playing games. ("Those who exalt the benevolence and righteousness of the ancient kings and yet cannot run the state well are only playing games but by no means truly ruling." -- "Outer Discussions on the Left, Part I") He firmly called for "practicing, not virtue, but law." ("The Five Vermin") Moreover, he summed up both the positive and negative experiences of the Legalists of the earlier times in introducing reform, and put forward an integral theory of the landlord class dictatorship combining law, political finesse and power.

The essence of the contention between "benevolence and righteousness" and "punishments" and between "rule of propriety" and "rule of law" is not whether it is necessary to resort to violence but which class should practice dictatorship. From the Marxist viewpoint, the Confucian "propriety" and the Legalist "law" are part of the superstructure built on a certain economic foundation and serve the political and economic interests of given classes. Lin Piao attacked the Legalists as "punishers" and praised Confucian "benevolence and righteousness," thus proving unequivocally that his deepseated hatred against the proletarian dictatorship and his vain attempt to restore in China the fascist dictatorship of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie were motivated by the nature of the landlord-bourgeois classes.

IV

A given world outlook is closely linked with a given political line. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, not only was there a struggle between the Confucian and Legalist political lines, but there existed also a violent strife between two world outlooks. Viewed from the theory of knowledge, the Legalist school favored materialism while the Confucian school trumpeted idealism. The focal point of the struggle between them was the contention between Heavenly mandate and the opposition to it.

Is there such a thing as "Heavenly mandate"? Those who attacked it denied its existence, while those who defended it acknowledged its existence. A fanatical advocate of the theory of Heavenly mandate, Confucius tried his utmost to preach that "Heaven" had a will, babbling that the "Heavenly mandate" was a sort of voiceless, supreme order. Moreover, he dressed himself up as a sage "knowing the mandate of Heaven," and asked the laboring people and the newly emerging landlord class to "respect Heavenly mandate." But Han Fei went the other way. Inheriting and developing Hsün K'uang's materialist thinking, he raised the fighting slogan "Vie to be known for strength," urging people not to believe in Heavenly mandate or ghosts and spirits. Thus he provided the newly emerging landlord class with a powerful ideological weapon with which to march onward triumphantly throughout the land of China. "Be like Heaven, be like earth; then who will be close to you, who will be distant?" ("Wielding Power") Han Fei took the view that Mother Nature did not differentiate

between people "close" to it and people "distant," and that we should never, as Confucius said, be "close" to the slave-owning aristocracy and "distant" to others. For another instance, Confucius, in order to turn the rule of the slave-owning nobility into something sacred and inviolable, described the reforms introduced by the emerging landlord class as acts "going against" Heaven. Han Fei, however, said that the succession of rulers had nothing to do with Heaven's will and that those rulers who were confused and weak would eventually be replaced by those who were wise and powerful. This was historical necessity. "A ruler who is confused and weak will perish; this is human nature. A ruler who is wise and strong will rule supreme; this has been the way since ancient times." ("Hidden Evils") Therefore, the "Heavenly mandate" fabricated by the slave-owning class could in no way save it from impending doom.

"Whether the thinking of man has objective truth is not a theoretical but a practical problem." (Marx, "On Feuerbach's Thesis") From the practice of the policies of farming and war by the landlord class, Han Fei found eloquent proof against Confucius' fallacy that "life and death are preordained; riches and honors come from Heaven." Were riches bestowed by Heaven? No. Han Fei stated: "The way to enrich a state is by farming." ("The Five Vermin") That is to say, a country enriches itself not by relying on Heaven but by getting the masses of its people organized to develop agricultural production. He considered such double-minded persons and parasites as Confucius useless to the country. ("If Confucius and Mo Tzu did not plow and weed, how could the state be governed?" -- "Eight Sayings") Han Fei also held that people who were enslaved -- be they farmers, prisoners, cooks, shepherds or cattle breeders -- might have their status changed and be promoted and employed for government service if they performed meritorious services in farming and war. ("On Doubts") Han Fei's thinking of opposing "Heavenly mandate" exerted positive, stimulating effects on the newly emerging landlord class at that time in organizing and mobilizing the people to engage in farming and war and develop the economic and military strength.

The struggle between the two lines in philosophy acutely reflects the struggle between two political lines. Confucius lauded the ancient kings as sages who were "born in the possession of knowledge," his aim being to use idealist transcendentalism to provide a theoretical basis for his political line of "restraining oneself and returning to propriety." But Han Fei, in order to push the Legalist political line and give tit for tat, set forth the materialist theory which attached importance to "participation in experiments" (testing man's knowledge through practical effects). He said that the power of a horse should be judged not by its appearance or age but by putting it to the test, and that the sharpness of a knife must be judged not by its color or luster but by testing it in slaughter. ("Eminence in Learning") He further stated that when all of us were asleep, it would be impossible to tell which one of us was blind and that if all of us did not speak, it would be impossible to tell which one of us was dumb. But once we opened our eyes and mouths, it would

be easy to tell the blind and the dumb. ("Six Oppositions") Han Fei stressed the need to test knowledge through practice. This in itself is an impressive criticism of Confucius and his like who lived by rumormongering and practicing sophistry. In the chapter "Hidden Evils," Han Fei also cited a large mass of facts to show that belief in divinations and in ghosts and spirits was an expression of stupidity and ignorance and was one of the signs of national extinction. In this way, he raised the struggle between respect of Heavenly mandate and opposition to it to the level of political struggle and forcefully exposed the reactionary purpose of the Confucians in advocating the mandate of Heaven.

V

The life of Han Fei was that of a brave fighter against Confucius. In the violent struggle to criticize Confucius and oppose Confucianism, he inherited, defended and developed the thinking of his Legalist predecessors and completed the theoretical preparations for the founding of a united feudal country with centralized power. Therefore, it was said that when Ch'in Shih Huang read Han Fei's writings such as "Solitary Indignation" and "The Five Vermin," he pounded his desk and exclaimed: "If I can see this man and make friends with him, I'll die without regrets!" ("Biographies of Lao, Chuang, Shen and Han, Historical Records")

However, after Han Fei, as a major historical fighter against Confucius, died, he has been cursed and attacked by the Confucius worshippers of successive ages. From Tung Chung-shu of the Han dynasty to Ssuma Kuang, Chu Hsi and the like of the Sung dynasty, all of them maliciously slandered him. The appearance of this situation was closely related to the changes in the historical position of the landlord class. Legalism had been the ideological weapon of the landlord class during its period of ascendancy. After the landlord class gradually turned from a real into a paper tiger, even while Han Fei's thinking in favor of landlord class dictatorship continued to be practiced by the feudal rulers of past ages, as an anti-Confucius fighter advocating reform, opposing restoration and incisively criticizing Confucianism, he had long been in the position where he was cursed and condemned by the feudal rulers. During the Han dynasty the Legalist Sang Hung-yang at the Conference on Salt and Iron still dared openly to quote from Han Fei's Legalist theories to prove the necessity of adhering to Emperor Wu's political line of consolidating national unification and strengthening the centralization of power. Yet after the Han dynasty, following the gradual elevation of Confucianism to the sacrosanct status, waves of worshipping Confucius and opposing the Legalists rose higher and higher, and voices denouncing and attacking Han Fei also became louder and louder. Under these historical conditions, even those Legalists within the landlord class who called for reforms succumbed to the heavy pressures of public opinion. Afraid of giving the diehards an excuse to attack them, they were often constrained to adopt the attitude of negating and opposing Han Fei. Only the outstanding characters among them dared to resist this

overbearing adverse current of worshipping Confucius and publicly made known their affirmative evaluation of Han Fei. Wang An-shih of the Sung dynasty was one of them. He made no secret of his desire to read Han Fei's writings. ("A Reply to Tseng Tzu-ku") In the Ming dynasty, Li Chih, the progressive thinker holding aloft the banner of honoring Legalism and opposing Confucianism, also publicly made known his "liking for Han Fei's works," ("Interpretation of Lao Tzu") and expressed the regret that Han Fei had not been used in the state of Ch'in. Among pre-Ch'in thinkers, Han Fei was the firmest and most clearcut in his attitude toward opposition to Confucius. Therefore, so far as those anti-Confucius, progressive thinkers in feudal society were concerned, their attitude toward Han Fei served as a yardstick measuring the degree of their opposition to Confucius.

After the Chinese bourgeoisie mounted the stage of history, further proof was given that appraisal of the Legalists including Han Fei was a major question of political attitude. Representative figures of different factions of the Chinese bourgeoisie differed in their evaluation of the Legalists. Even the same person might reach different appraisals in different periods of his time due to changes in his political stand. Among the bourgeois reformists, Yen Fu affirmed Han Fei's historical position. He said: "If we now speak of saving the country, we can only learn from a few men like Shen /Pu-hai/ and Han /Fei/." ("Correspondence between Yen Chi-tao and Hsiung Ch'un-ju") K'ang Yu-wei, due to his stronger ties with the feudal diehard forces, adopted a hostile attitude toward the Legalists, saying, "Those who attack Confucianism offer many reasons, but none so unreasonable as Shen and Han." ("Inquiry into Confucius' Reform"*) K'ang Yu-wei dreamed of taking the reformist road, and this decided his opposition to the Legalist theories represented by Han Fei and his final degeneration into a Royalist clown. The bourgeois revolutionist Chang T'ai-yen adopted a more clearcut attitude toward the Legalists. In the two historical essays "Notes on Ch'in's Contributions" and "Notes on Ch'in's Rule," he warmly affirmed the progressiveness of such Legalists as Shang Yang, Han Fei, Ch'in Shih Huang and Li Ssu. He was worthy of being a great bourgeois revolutionist during the period of the 1911 Revolution. But suffering from class and historical limitations, he was in no way thorough either in negating Confucianism or in affirming Legalism. Particularly in his remaining years, as the bourgeoisie turned more and more reactionary politically, this bourgeois revisionist even turned around from worshipping Legalism and opposing Confucianism to worshipping Confucianism and opposing Legalism and thus entirely betrayed his own revolutionary past.

Chairman Mao teaches us: "We must study not only the China of today but also the China of yesterday and the day before yesterday." The immediate class struggle is a continuation of the historical class struggle. The struggle between Confucian and Legalist schools over the past more than 2,000 years still makes its influence felt today and has continued down to this day. Being the biggest Confucius worshipper within the Party, Lin Piao the renegade actively joined the ranks of the Confucius-worshipping restorationists of the past; he abused the Legalists including Han Fei

* 孔子改制考

for the purpose of reversing the historical verdicts about the criticism of Confucianism by the Legalists, the verdicts of the criticism of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius by Chairman Mao in the course of the two-line struggle within the Party, and the verdicts of the great proletarian cultural revolution. The aim of reversing this series of verdicts was, in the final analysis, to reverse the verdicts of the overthrow of the landlord and bourgeois classes by the revolutionary people in a futile attempt to help the overthrown landlord and bourgeois classes come to power again and ride roughshod over the broad masses of the laboring people once more. This struggle between the attempt at reversal of verdicts and the effort to oppose it is a reflection of class struggle and the line struggle running through the entire period of socialist revolution. Hence, we must follow Chairman Mao's teachings, and in a deep-going, widespread and sustained manner criticize the reactionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and the revisionist lines of Liu Shao-ch'i, Lin Piao and company, so that this handful of Confuciuses of modern China and all sorts of opportunist ideas they advocated will never have their say!

Today, the task of thoroughly criticizing Confucianism and scientifically appraising Legalism has been placed on the shoulders of the proletariat by history. When penetratingly criticizing the ultra-Right essence of Lin Piao's worship of Confucius and opposition to Legalism, we must make a serious study of the history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle, conduct a Marxist study and analysis of the Legalists and their writings, and thus carry the struggle to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius into the various spheres of the superstructure including philosophy, history, literature and art, and jurisprudence.

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Why the Reactionaries Have To Applaud Wu Hsün

by

Shih Shang-hui (史尚辉)

(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an [Study and Criticism], No. 8, August 20, 1974)

The 1951 criticism of the "Story of Wu Hsün" (hereafter "Story") was the first criticize-Confucius struggle led and launched by Chairman Mao during China's socialist revolution period. It was Chairman Mao who personally penned the famous editorial for Jen-min Jih-pao entitled "Importance Should Be Attached to the Discussion of the Film 'Story'." The editorial clearly pointed out: "The problems posed by 'Story' are fundamental in character." This was subsequently accompanied by most penetrating criticisms of Wu Hsün as well as films, novels, biographic sketches and articles extolling him.

In looking back at the struggle which occurred 23 years ago, we can see that when "Story" was taken to task Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou Yang, who dished up "Story," pretended to repudiate Wu Hsün and "Story" by calling upon people to "distinguish Wu Hsün from Confucius" and talk about Confucius' "outstanding contributions." Chou Yang, for instance, credited Confucius with making "feudal culture shine with gorgeous radiance." He dressed up Confucius and made him look like a great man spurring the advance of society. Earlier it was Liu Shao-ch'i and company who "equated" Wu Hsün with Confucius. But now these people sprang out and spoke of Wu Hsün as being "reactionary" and Confucius as "progressive," a stratagem of freeing oneself from what could be an embarrassing situation. Pretending to criticize Wu Hsün, in reality they wanted to applaud Confucius. This at once betrayed their reactionary features of worshipping Confucius. Like the feudal rulers of the Ch'ing dynasty, the Northern Warlords and Kuomintang reactionaries, they all applauded Confucius and Wu Hsün.

Why did the reactionaries in modern China applaud Wu Hsün? Each had his own motive. Essentially, they were all for retrogression and national betrayal and against advance and patriotism.

What kind of person was Wu Hsün? He was originally known as Wu Ch'i. The name "hsün" was given him by the feudal ruler of the Ch'ing dynasty, allegedly as a gesture in recognition of his merit in "reviving the ways of the sages" -- as "example for posterity throughout the empire." He was a reactionary arch scoundrel, a major moneylender, a big landlord who had climbed up the social ladder through "establishing schools." He renounced the working people, prostrated himself before the feudal rulers and took the reactionary road of upholding the decadent feudal rule. What he said or did conformed strictly to the "rules of propriety" of feudal authority. Whenever he invited the teachers of the "public [charitable] schools" he had set up for dinner, he would stand outside the door of his home with due respect and decorum and wait for the arrival of the learned men who were graduates of second or third degrees

under the old system, helping himself with what leftovers he could find on the table. He would often tell people he "should in no way act against the rules of propriety before the teachers." More than anything else, his pre-occupation with "running public schools" demonstrated that he was taking the reactionary road of "restraining oneself and returning to propriety."

Wu Hsün's adherents spoke of his preoccupation with "establishing and running public schools" with gusto and as something "amazing," "marvellous," "a wonderful feat." This was altogether deceitful, a downright fraud. A given culture is the ideological reflection of the politics and economy of a given society. Any social ideal, regardless of its form of expression, eccentric or otherwise, can only reflect the political and economical requirements of a particular class. "Public schools" at that time represented a "cause" that the Ch'ing dynasty feudal rulers "urged" local landlords and prominent gentry to undertake, a tool for the feudal landlord class to impose cultural autocracy on the working people. The "schools" Wu Hsün had set up were divided into advanced and elementary classes, with the former offering courses in Confucian Classics to those with the requisite qualifications, such as proven ability to write "eight-legged" or stereotyped essays replete with quotations from Confucian Classics. On the other hand, reading material prescribed for those attending the elementary class never went beyond the Three-Character Classics or Thousand-Word Essay. Most of the students came of landlord families, with a few from those of rich peasants and merchants. None, however, was known to have come of working people families. The teachers were scholars with "very high qualifications," being all graduates who had passed imperial civil service examinations. Without exception, they were Confucian and Mencian devotees. Sitting on the Board of Directors of these "schools" and holding supreme powers were local wealthy and influential gentry and landlords. They admitted the "schools" established by Wu Hsün followed the "admonitions of the sages" in conducting classroom instruction, for the purpose of "pledging loyalty to the emperor." This shows that people trained and brought up at these "schools" could only be Confucian and Mencian devotees, loyal and servile to feudal rule. No wonder Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, a Confucius-worshipper, said approvingly: "For decades innumerable people who had studied in these schools became Confucian scholars." Before he died, Wu Hsün insisted on listening to recitations of the Four Books and Five Classics by students of these "schools," to express his enduring devotion to feudal rule through perpetuation of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

The history of Wu Hsün's preoccupation with "establishing schools" was one of practicing deceit. Donning the cloak of "begging" he on the one hand claimed he was setting up schools for the poor and, on the other, used every unscrupulous means to deceive others wherever he went. The money he had obtained by fraudulent means was handed to the landlords for making loans to others. He was thus able to acquire large tracts of land and became a land-owner himself. On the other hand, he degraded himself and employed every conceivable means to collude with the landlords, local despots and bureaucrats of different ranks. Setting up schools was his

means to achieving the end of serving feudal rule. This made him a political swindler favored by the reactionary rulers. Not surprisingly the reactionaries applauded Wu Hsün, saying that he was even smarter than Ning Wu-tzu, a high official in the state of Wei, whose pretense and trickery had never been surpassed by anyone known to Confucius. This shows the importance attached by the reactionary rulers to Wu Hsün's deceit.

Political swindler Wu Hsün really met the political needs of the reactionary rulers. "The combination of these two aspects (begging and setting up schools) is well liked by all reactionary rulers at all times, and great efforts have been made toward its promotion," according to Record of Investigations into the History of Wu Hsün. What Confucius had preached about "cardinal moral virtues" such as "benevolence," "righteousness," "loyalty" and "faith" was credited to Wu Hsün by the feudal rulers of the Ch'ing dynasty. In their views, Wu Hsün epitomized the Confucius-type "sage." This appellation is recorded in the Album in Commemoration of the 97th Birthday of Wu Hsün, which reads among other things: "Shantung abounds in sages, such as Confucius the Sage of the past and Wu Hsün the Sage of the present." When Wu Hsün was still alive, he was carried in public as the mascot. One Ch'ing emperor remarked with elation, "Having this upright man around it would be possible to give impetus to exemplary conduct and practices and foster talents." The imperial court also conferred honorary titles on him and bestowed a tablet written by the emperor in recognition of his "worthy deeds and charitable disposition." After his death, he was further given posthumous honors and recognition, such as enshrining his name in historical chronicles and family temples.

After the feudal rule of the Ch'ing dynasty was toppled, both the Northern Warlords and the Kuomintang reactionaries likewise applauded Wu Hsün. They looked upon him as a tool for honoring Confucius and restoring the old order and suppressing popular revolutions. They did so to stop the wheel of history from moving on and to uphold their ruling position.

During the May 4 Movement when the proletariat and vast numbers of revolutionary people were fiercely pounding at the "Confucian junk shop," Sha Ming-yuan and other followers of Wu Hsün like the counselors of the Northern Warlords government did their best to publicize Wu Hsün's deeds in connection with his preoccupation with "establishing schools through begging." In a petition to Hsü Shih-ch'ang, then head of the government set up by the Northern Warlords, they asked for a "tablet" to "immortalize Wu Hsün's moral integrity and public spirit," citing that the imperial court of the Ch'ing dynasty had already commended Wu Hsün's "worthy deeds." Hsu Shih-ch'ang promptly ordered that a "tablet" commending Wu Hsün's "dedication to the public good" be set up in order to undermine the revolutionary people's anti-Confucius struggle. The presidential action was quickly endorsed by the government of the Northern Warlords, with the chief cabinet minister down all eulogizing Wu Hsün's "worthy deeds." While appealing for "more donations for more schools," they were actually trumpeting worshipping Confucius and reading the Classics to counter the

revolutionary people's struggle to topple the "Confucian shop." Under the impact of the crushing anti-Confucius struggle, they bemoaned "moral depravity" and frenziedly called for a revival of the Wu Hsün spirit, calling Wu Hsün a "gift of Heaven" and clamoring that what he had done "corresponds to the deeds of the former sages." They even shamelessly identified Wu Hsün as "one of those since Confucius" through the efforts of "prominent people in the country" to project Wu Hsün's image "throughout the world to startle the powers then and now." These references to Wu Hsün in laudatory terms, emanating from the government of the Northern Warlords, constituted at that time a vicious tidal wave in the honor-Confucius adverse current.

The publication in 1934 of an album "commemorating the 97th birthday of Wu Hsün" was an important aspect of the counter-revolutionary "encirclement and suppression" campaigns launched by the Kuomintang reactionaries. The latter used Wu Hsün to coordinate their "suppression" attempt. Chiang Kai-shek was then in his Nanchang "communist suppression" headquarters. He was preoccupied on the one hand with putting down the people's revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party and, on the other, taking the lead in applauding Wu Hsün. This lone man and enemy of the people wrote a eulogy on "Story" to commend Wu Hsün's dedication to the "great cause" of fostering a number of Confucian and Mencian devotees, leaving a "boon" to others so they could deceive and benumb the people. He also praised Wu Hsün for taking the "unprecedented" action in blending "benevolence" with "righteousness" and this identified him as having "endured great hardships." What did "benevolence" here mean? In a speech delivered at the time, he said: Communism is "heresy without benevolence" while "suppressing the bandits (this should read putting down the revolution) is to practice benevolence." This shows that Chiang Kai-shek praised Wu Hsün for his "benevolence and righteousness in the right proportion" because he wanted people to emulate Wu Hsün and his counter-revolutionary "spirit" so they would follow him in slaughtering the people. Other reactionary leaders of the Kuomintang followed suit. They showered praises on Wu Hsün, eulogizing him in couplets, introductory remarks and articles and extolling him to the skies. Some compared him "favorably with the wise men of previous generations." Others identified him as one who "is capable of being a teacher for a hundred generations." One Kuomintang warlord named Ho Ch'eng-chün composed a long song after the pattern of the song dedicated by Wu Hsün to the "schools" he had set up, a song which praised Wu Hsün's "spirit of shunning riches and honor, his simple nature characterized by righteousness and benevolence, and his indomitable will to remove mountains and reclaim seas." He lamented Wu Hsün's untimely demise and said if he had lived to this day .... he would have surpassed all his illustrious contemporaries. This was a naked revelation of the sinister motives of the Kuomintang reactionaries in parading Wu Hsün before the public for the purpose of suppressing and slaughtering the people. Since Wu Hsün served as a very useful tool as far as the Kuomintang reactionaries were concerned, no wonder Chiang Kai-shek was full of praise for Wu Hsün and looked upon him as an "exemplary person" as Confucius was.

During the third revolutionary period, student movements against hunger and persecution erupted in Kuomintang-controlled areas. They again invoked Wu Hsün and told the students: "If you have done those things comparable to Wu Hsün's dedication to establishing schools through begging, there will be a way out in society." In order to coordinate his plans for starting a civil war, Chiang Kai-shek approved of a plan to film "Story" for the purpose of "educating" the people. Filming was undertaken at the China Film Studio, run by Kuomintang officials. In short, whenever the struggle between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces intensified, the Kuomintang reactionaries would invariably display Wu Hsün and parade him in public so as to trumpet the "Wu Hsün spirit" and oppose revolution and fool the people.

Just as class capitulation would invariably lead to national capitulation, worshipping Confucius would invariably lead to national betrayal. Wu Hsün capitulated to the landlord class and frantically trumpeted the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. In essence, this was tantamount to capitulating to imperialist domination of China. Therefore, whenever the reactionary rulers were engaged in capitulationist and national betrayal activities, they would invariably be linked with efforts to applaud Wu Hsün. For example, when the Kuomintang reactionaries were completing plans in 1938 to compromise with and capitulate to Japanese imperialism, they decreed commendation of Wu Hsün in the name of Lin Sen, "Chairman of the National Government," K'ung Hsiang-hsi, "President of the Executive Yuan," Ho Chien, "Minister of Internal Affairs," and Ch'en Li-fu, "Minister of Education." The order for commending Wu Hsün mentioned his "filial piety" and "determination and fortitude" -- "sterling qualities" which "should deserve commendation despise the elapse of nearly a hundred years as an example for others." They advocated following the example of Wu Hsün of capitulating to feudalism and imperialism and created public opinion in favor of surrendering to Japanese imperialism. During Japanese occupation of Shanghai, the puppet regime of Wang Ching-wei in Shanghai likewise produced a film entitled "Charitable Beggars," with Wu Hsün as the theme, in a vain attempt to lure the Chinese people in occupied areas to be people without a country. The puppet administrators in other areas also encouraged young people to "become another Wu Hsün by starting from scratch and winning immortal merits as Wu Hsün did." This band of collaborators and traitors applauded Wu Hsün with unusual vigor so as to meet the needs of Japanese imperialism of vainly trying to bring ruin to China.

Liu Shao-ch'i, chieftain of opportunist lines within the Party, and his kind likewise looked upon Wu Hsün as something to be treasured. When the newly founded People's Republic of China was entering upon the period of socialist revolution, they took over the filming of "Story" which was left unfinished by the Kuomintang reactionaries. This reactionary film was dished up and released in 1951. The reason why people like Liu Shao-ch'i applauded Wu Hsün was that they wanted to applaud Confucius and trumpet the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. The reactionary film "Story" depicts how Wu Hsün at the age of seven came upon a copy of Three-Character Classics "as if he has found something he has long treasured."

The film also praises Wu Hsün, such as how he capitulated to the landlord class, set up "schools," held "solemn and impressive ceremonies," and "kowtowed before a tablet in honor of Confucius, the supreme sage and teacher." In glowing language the film praises the feudal landlord class, worships Confucius, trumpets the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, and opposes the people's revolution. Chiang Kai-shek in 1934 observed "Wu Hsün's 97th birthday." Liu Shao-ch'i and company in 1951 likewise lustily sang the praises of Wu Hsün on the occasion of his 110th "birthday commemoration meeting." According to "Story," they lustily sang: "Wu Hsün the great, how brave and benevolent he was. ....Prevailing customs and practices have declined, the vast land is sinking day after day! Who will enlighten me in my folly, who will relieve my poverty? ....Wu Hsün the great, how brave and benevolent he was. He established schools through begging. There was none like him in millennia." Here, people can find the similarity between this and the 1934 commemoration of "Wu Hsün's 97th birthday" held under the auspices of the Kuomintang reactionaries. If there is any difference between the two episodes, it lies in the abusive reference to the phrase "Prevailing customs and practices have declined, the vast land is sinking day after day" -- due to the bitterness of Liu Shao-ch'i and company about the victory of the Chinese people's revolution and socialist revolution.

The appearance of the reactionary film "Story" was a product of Liu Shao-ch'i's preoccupation with the reactionary political line of restoring capitalism. It identified the landlord and bourgeois classes with using the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to impose dictatorship on the newly founded proletariat in China and signaled frantic attacks on Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Revolving around the struggle against this film has been the struggle between honoring Confucius and opposing him, between revolution and counter-revolution, between advance and regression, and between the two classes and the two lines. Great leader Chairman Mao personally led the criticism of "Story," a great struggle which penetratingly brought out the hideous features of Liu Shao-ch'i and his band of Confucius-worshippers. He pointed out: "In the views of many writers, the development of history is not replacing old things with new things; it is preservation through every possible means of old things to prevent their extinction. It is not the employment of class struggle to topple the reactionary feudal rulers that should be overthrown, but to capitulate to the reactionary feudal rulers like Wu Hsün, who negated the class struggle by the oppressed people."

Chairman Mao's thesis hit Liu Shao-ch'i and company and all Confucius-worshippers where it hurt most, penetratingly repudiated the reactionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, defeated the opportunist line pursued by Liu Shao-ch'i and company, defended proletarian dictatorship, and guided the Chinese people to advance triumphantly along the socialist road.

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Young Workers on the History of the Confucian-Legalist Struggle (Concluded)*

(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an [Study and Criticism], No. 8, August 20, 1974)

We now continue with our discussion of the Confucian-Legalist struggle during the period from the two Hans to Ming and Ch'ing. Throughout these two thousand years the two-line struggle between the Confucian and Legalist schools continued to persist. But with the development of history, this struggle correspondingly underwent changes in both class content and in its manifestations. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods and at the time of the Ch'in dynasty, the Confucian-Legalist struggle was essentially one between the newly rising landlord class and the declining slave-owner class, a struggle in which the feudal system replaced the slave system. The post-Han struggle was mainly one between the reformist and conservationist factions within the landlord class.

In view of the undulating development of the class and national struggles during the aforementioned periods lasting more than two thousand years, the Confucian-Legalist struggle likewise went through different historical stages. What follows concerns the circumstances about relatively major Confucian-Legalist struggles.

(1) Big Debate at the Conference on Salt and Iron

What accounted for the big debate on salt and iron which took place during the middle of the Western Han period? This was brought about by the class struggle and national contradictions which had prevailed at that time.

The big peasant uprising led by Ch'en Sheng and Wu Kuang which occurred in the last year of Ch'in toppled the Ch'in royal court and swept away the influence and power of the old nobles of the six states, making production relations more in conformity with the development of social productive forces. The big peasant uprising which occurred in the latter part of Ch'in laid the foundation for the consolidation of national unification in the former period of Western Han and the flourishing of the social economy.

After Han Emperor Liu Pang founded the Western Han dynasty, he was faced with the primary problem of contradiction with the reactionary forces of division, the restorationist forces of the slave owners in industry and commerce, and the aggressive forces of the slave-owning Huns. More than ten thousand "bondservants" or slaves were then owned by many slave owners in industry and commerce. They obtained political backing from such ambitious vassals with the rank of king as

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* For the first installment, see SPRCM No. 789, p. 59.

Han Hsin and Liu Pi. The latter colluded with the aggressive forces of the slave-owning Huns in order to realize their fond dream of splitting and dominanting part of the empire. This constituted the lurking danger to the reigning Western Han dynasty.

In these circumstances the feudal rulers in the former Western Han period, starting with Liu Pang, in the main practiced the Legalist line and policies. Liu Pang and Lu Hou [Empress Lu] had successively quelled the revolts by Han Hsin and other vassal-kings. Emperor Ching of Han put down the turmoil which spread to seven states including Wu and Ch'u. Emperor Wu of Han promulgated an edict extending favors to the worthy and the able in an attempt to deal blows to the divisive forces of the vassals. He also appointed Sang Hung-yang, a prominent and representative Legalist, Coordinator of State Finances. Subsequent implementation of government control of salt and iron seriously curbed the influence of the slave owners in industry and commerce. The grave danger of restoration by the slave owners had by then been basically eliminated. At the same time Emperor Wu appointed Wei Ch'ing and Huo Ch'U-ping, who came of slave families, generals and eventually succeeded in repelling the inroads of the invading Huns from the north. This further consolidated the feudal rule of the landlord class based on centralized power.

During the reign of Emperor Wu of Han, however, the landlord class used the reactionary preachings of the Confucianists as a tool to oppress and enslave the peasants. This the landlord class did to uphold its vested interests. Accordingly, that class was gradually moving toward honoring Confucianism and opposing Legalism, as was reflected in the move to "ostracize all other schools and respect only Confucian ideals" proposed by Tung Chung-shu. Particularly after the death of Emperor Wu, General Huo Kuang, representing the Confucian line, took advantage of Emperor Chao's immaturity and youth to usurp part of his powers. After years of elaborate planning, he recruited Confucian scholars who claimed to be "the worthy" and "learned men." At a debate on salt and iron called in the year 81 B.C., he attacked Sang Hung-yang in an attempt to use it as a pretext for abolishing the policy of government control of salt and iron. This at one stroke altered the political line pursued by the Legalists and provoked a big Confucian-Legalist polemic. A record of this debate on salt and iron was prepared by Huan K'uan of Han dynasty.

Since the age of 13, Sang Hung-yang, an outstanding Legalist representative, had served Emperor Wu of Han. For as long as 30 years he assumed the top financial coordination post. He participated in the formulation and implementation of Emperor Wu's Legalist line of consolidating the system of centralized power and opposing the aggression carried out by the Huns. At the debate on salt and iron he put up a strong case and bravely defended the Legalist political line in his argument despite the frantic attacks launched by the reactionary Confucianists.

The debate on salt and iron centered primarily around these two aspects: whether it is for unification and consolidation of centralized power or for division and secession; and whether it is for resistance to the invading Huns and reinforcement of border defenses or for appeasement and surrender.

Let us begin with the first question.

In their desperate opposition to government control of salt and iron in favor of private operation of the vital industries, Huo Kuang and company outwardly appeared to advocate alteration of a particular aspect of the economic policy. In reality they sought to alter Emperor Wu's Legalist political line. At the debate these "worthy" "learned men" viciously and with ulterior motives carried the banner of "pleading for the people," declaring that government control of salt and iron would eventually cause economic stagnation and impair national viability. Sang Hung-yang perceived their sinister intentions. He pointed out on justifiable grounds: Government control of salt and iron is indeed a fine thing as it benefits the state. It is fraught with vital political significance since it not only increases the fiscal revenues of the state but more importantly rocks the economic foundations of the divisive and secessionist forces. Sang Hung-yang further unmasked the "worthy" "learned men" by debunking what they called "people," saying that they meant a handful of despotic and powerful big landlords and big slave owners in industry and commerce, not the vast numbers of toiling people. Severely reprimanding these "worthy" "learned men," Sang Hung-yang said incisively: Gentlemen, if we follow you, the gain will only go to the local bullying forces, and the state can get nothing done. Your views which work to the detriment of the central government are merely in the service of the local secessionist forces. This critical remark hit the "worthy" "learned men" where it hurt most, fully revealing the reactionary motives of the feudal secessionist forces and the restorationist forces of the slave owners.

Now the second question.

At the debate on salt and iron the "worthy" "learned men" likewise viciously attacked Emperor Wu's policy of resisting the inroads of the slave-owning Huns. Talking nonsense, they contended that the aggressors should not be hit back and blamed some "meddlesome ministers" for making something out of nothing before Emperor Wu and for having provoked war. They also fallaciously advocated the futility of resisting aggression and favored dismantling all the defense installations and negotiating peace with and surrendering to the slave-owning Huns. This fully exposed the traitorous features of this band of Confucian and Mencian devotees. Taking the stand of upholding national unification and resistance, Sang Hung-yang sharply refuted the fallacies of capitulation and national betrayal spread by the "worthy" "learned men." He cautioned against harboring any illusions about the slave-owning Huns, who were by nature aggressive and perfidious. He called for waging a just war against the aggressors and defeating them in the battlefield. His advocacy of a just war in the name of righteousness to wipe out and defeat the aggressors was in dauntless defense of Emperor Wu's resistance policy line to strengthen centralization of state authority.

At the big debate Confucian fallacies were torn apart and refuted completely by Sang Hung-yang. However, not long after the debate was over, Sang Hung-yang was killed by Huo Kuang who made some excuse for his doing so. Since Sang Hung-yang was murdered, a reactionary line honoring Confucianism and opposing Legalism began to be implemented by the time Emperor Yuan of Han ascended the throne, despite the efforts of his predecessors, Emperor Hsuan and Emperor Chao, to pursue the Legalist line for some time. A vigorous promoter of Confucianism, Emperor Yuan declared he would not compete with the "people" for gain. He gave the powerful landlords and big merchants a free hand, permitting them to exploit and oppress the peasants with abandon. This rapidly intensified the contradictions between the landlord class and the vast numbers of peasants. During the reign of Wang Mang the fierce conflagration of peasant uprisings was spreading throughout the empire. The peasant insurgents toppled the utterly corrupt rule of Wang Mang and dealt heavy blows to the powerful landlords entrenched in various principalities. This led to the emancipation of tens of millions of slaves and bondservants and brought out the great strength of slaves as the makers of history.

During the Eastern Han period the Confucian-Legalist struggle continued under new historical conditions. Progressive thinkers of the landlord class represented by Wang Ch'ung, Wang Fu and Chung Ch'ang-t'ung clung to the line in favor of honoring Legalism and opposing Confucianism. Wang Ch'ung in particular wrote piquant essays to revile the reactionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and reveal the utter pretense of Confucian preachings. But he proceeded from the formalistic logic approach and failed to perceive the Confucian-Legalist polemics as part of the line struggle. This was determined by Wang Ch'ung's class and historical limitations.

A major uprising led by the Yellow Turbans erupted near the end of the Eastern Han period, a peasant uprising which dealt stunning blows to the powerful families of Eastern Han. It was against this background that Ts'ao Ts'ao, Liu Pei, Sun Ch'üan, Chuko Liang and other Legalists appeared. Hitting at the local divisive and secessionist forces, they contributed in varying degrees toward unifying the empire. Ts'ao Ts'ao in particular advocated "rule by law" and achieved significant results. He was, in Lu Hsün's words, "at least a hero." The fiefdom system was restored following the establishment of the Western Tsin government by the Ssuma clan, a move which eventually led to "turmoil involving eight kings." In their attempts to seize the throne and maintain the empire in a state of dismemberment, they were in collusion with the slave-owning forces in the north like the Huns, Hsienpeis and Wuhuans. This resulted in nearly three centuries of divisions and internecine warfare in China.

(2) Liu Tsung-yuan's "On Feudalism"

The major peasant uprising which occurred at the end of the Sui period dealt heavy blows to the forces of powerful clans since the Western Tsin dynasty. The T'ang dynasty founded after the peasant uprising was a powerful and unified feudal empire in Chinese history. T'ang Emperor Li

Shih-min and a little later Wu Tse-t'ien* introduced some reforms politically and economically in order to uphold the unification of the empire and oppose inroads by alien tribes. Wu Tse-t'ien had done something in this respect. As a woman who became ruler, she herself was in repudiation of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. During her reign, a progressive and prominent historian of the landlord class named Liu Chih-chi wrote articles attacking the Spring and Autumn Annals, said to have been compiled by Confucius, for its numerous mistakes and accusing the Confucianists of applauding the five major aspects of "abstract beauty" of the compilation. He thus inherited and carried forward the fighting spirit of the Legalists of opposing Confucianism.

With the increasingly serious annexations of land and the rising influence of the big landlords in the middle period of the T'ang dynasty, there was a resurgence of the honor-Confucianism and oppose-Legalism trend of thought. At this juncture, Tang Hsüan-tsung conferred on Confucius the title "King Wen-hsuan." In order to uphold and widen their secessionist forces, senior officials who were assigned to remote principalities advocated a return to the old system of dividing the country into fiefdoms in an attempt to split the unified T'ang empire into independent kingdoms. Accompanying this adverse retrogressive current politically was the appearance of a big Confucian-Legalist polemic in the ideological sphere. The controversy centered around the question of unification or split, whether it would be more desirable to persist in centralized power or to divide and rule. In order to find a theoretical basis for their reactionary political views and programs, the reactionary forces advocating divisions and secession viciously attacked Legalists like Ch'in Shih Huang and Shang Yang. In this struggle, Liu Tsung-yuan, an outstanding materialist thinker of the landlord class in the T'ang dynasty, bravely came forward to fight for progress and unification and against retrogression and divisions. His famous work On Feudalism fiercely castigated the reactionary adverse current of honoring Confucianism and opposing Legalism.

On Feudalism first emphatically points out that the prefectural system replacing the vassalage system is an inevitable course in history. It gives high evaluation to Ch'in Shih Huang and the measures he adopted to abolish the vassalage system, institute the prefectural system and establish an empire of centralized power. It fully affirms that the reform was in accord with the tide of history, a view that was deemed outstanding at that time.

In On Feudalism Liu Tsung-yuan severely criticized the perverted behavior of going in for the vassalage system. He pointed out that during the first few years of Western Han vassalage was practiced with the result that a few years later the central government was beset with troubles both internally and externally. During the Wei and Tsin periods vassalage was again practiced and this more than anything else brought about the rapid decline and collapse of successive royal courts. Liu Tsung-yuan also summed up the historical experience of the struggles for unification and against divisions since the founding of the T'ang empire.

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* Empress Wu.

He pointed out that one important reason for the sustained state of unification during the T'ang period was strict adherence to the prefectural system instituted since the founding of the Ch'in empire. Conversely, he noted that the prevalence of divisions and secession was mainly due to failure to adhere to the prefectual system. The lesson drawn from history is: there is no way out for turning back and the old system in no way should be restored. A retrogression to vassalage would only lead to divisions and inroads by aliens.

Liu Tsung-yuan's On Feudalism constitutes a summation of the Confucian-Legalist polemics that revolved around the prefectural system and vassalage since the Ch'in and Han periods, a general reckoning of the secessionist trend of thought and that of favoring a return to the old order thinking which prevailed at that time. Su Shih of the Sung dynasty had to admit that Liu Tsung-yuan's views had outdated those of other thinkers and philosophers. This shows that this work exerted profound historical influence. In Chinese history a relatively prolonged period of political unification significantly contributed toward the development of the social economy and culture as well as to the formation and consolidation of multinational states. In post-Ch'in Chinese history, about two-thirds of more than two thousand years witnessed a prolonged state of unification while only one-third was marked by divisions. For more than six hundred years Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing empires remained unified. National unification has been the general trend in the development of Chinese history, the common desire of the Chinese people for a long period of time. Led by great leader Chairman Mao, the Chinese people persist in unification and oppose a split. On the other hand, counter-revolutionary conspirator Lin Piao acted perversely and frantically resorted to splittist activities, vainly trying to set up another Central Committee and capitulate to Soviet revisionist social imperialism. This criminal plot to subvert the proletarian dictatorship practiced in our country completely ran counter to the trend of historical development and was against the wish of the Chinese people. Therefore, the counter-revolutionary conspiracy of Lin Piao and company went bankrupt ignominiously.

(3) Wang An-shih's "Ching-kung Hsin-hsueh" [Ching Kung's New Learning]

The state of divisions which involved five dynasties and ten states lasted only 50-60 years and a unified empire reappeared after the founding of the Northern Sung dynasty by Chao K'uang-yin.

The Sung period, however, was marked by a sharpening of class and national contradictions. A handful of big landlords occupied more than 70 percent of the territory of the empire. Peasant uprisings broke out in rapid succession, "increasing year after year and growing stronger with the formation of new bands." The Liaos from the north and the Hsihsias from the northwest continuously pushed southward. It was in these complex circumstances that Confucius' position was elevated higher and higher by the feudal rulers. Sung Chen-tsung conferred

exalted titles on him. Confucianism became the rational school of philosophers or Taoism; it became the reactionary state philosophy during the latter period of China's feudal society. The Confucian-Legalist struggle during this period manifested itself prominently in the struggle between Wang An-shih's "Ching-kung Hsin-hsueh" (荆公新学) and the reactionary school of rational philosophy.

Wang An-shih, "a Chinese reformist in the 11th century," was a great believer in patriotism. He called for the introduction of reform measures to restrain the big landlords from annexing land, urging that war preparedness be stepped up to resist external invasions and uphold a unified state. To provide his reform program with a theoretical basis, Wang An-shih absorbed Legalist ideas and founded a new school of philosophy he called "Chingkung Hsin-hsueh." In opposition to Wang An-shih's reform measures was Ssuma Kuang, who represented the diehards of the big landlord class. These diehards rabidly opposed reform and trumpeted national betrayal and capitulation. They likened Wang An-shih to Shao Cheng Mao, implying that he should be put to death.

In the spirit of daring to go against the tide, Wang An-shih issued the militant slogan "Portents of Heaven are not to be feared; old ancestral traditions cannot be used as guidance; other people's criticisms need not be worried about" to refute and reject Confucius' reactionary creed regarding "fear of Heavenly mandate, fear of great men, and fear of sages and what they say." The "three not's" call shook the intellectual circles, then serving as pools of stagnant water, like a loud thunderclap. In his writings Wang An-shih openly praised Legalist representatives like Shang Yang and Sang Hung-yang, indicating that he carried out his reform measures under the guidance of Legalist concepts.

Wang An-shih became Prime Minister with the backing of Sung Shen-tsung. In office for about six years, he carried out such reform measures as opposing big landlords annexing land, advocating development of agriculture, overhauling the military system, strengthening military capabilities and reinforcing frontier defenses. None of these reform programs was implemented without fierce struggle. He was appointed prime minister twice and was dismissed twice. His program for reform was eventually discontinued through objections by the diehards of the big landlords. His "Ching-kung Hsin-hsueh" was also abandoned. The diehard group persisted in honoring Confucianism and opposing Legalism. This weakened the Sung dynasty which eventually collapsed. The fall of Northern Sung was attributed to the reactionary and conservative line of honoring Confucianism and opposing Legalism pursued by the big landlord class. However, Wang An-shih was attacked by a reactionary Confucian scholar named Shao Po-wen of Southern Sung, who wrote a sinister article On Identifying Treachery under the pseudonym Su Hsun. The article blamed Wang An-shih's reform for hastening the collapse of Northern Sung. This reactionary and crudely written article, a vicious perversion of history, was nevertheless treasured by bourgeois careerist and conspirator Lin Piao, who looked upon it as the theoretical basis for his "coup project." This amply shows that Lin Piao was as deceitful and despicable as those reactionary Confucian scholars who had to play tricks to get by.

After dooming the Northern Sung dynasty, the diehards of the big landlord class withdrew to the region south of the Yangtze River to set up a small court with the title of Southern Sung. The more decadent the feudal ruling classes, the more systematized the reactionary school of principle or reason became. This brought into being the idealist rationalism of the school of principle of which Chu Hsi was the chief exponent. The doctrine of principle as preached by Chu Hsi was essentially a manifestation in real life of the concept of reactionary rule of the big landlord class. In other words, it embraced the Confucian dogma of the "three bonds and five constant virtues." In Chu Hsi's commentaries on the Four Books -- the Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean and the Book of Mencius -- he first enshrined them as the basic texts of the Confucian school. In subsequent dynasties -- Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing -- these texts, with Chu Hsi's commentary, became the basis of the civil service examinations and thus, in effect, the official orthodoxy of the ruling classes. Chu Hsi's approach to idealist rationalism, in accord with the decline of feudal society, may be interpreted as a theoretical summation of the attempt of the big landlord class to reinforce ideological domination by confirming the philosophy of Chu Hsi as authoritative expositions of Confucian teaching. However, this philosophy which Chu Hsi defined as including matters of conduct and human relations and his commentary on the Four Books were accepted by renegade and traitor Lin Piao. Chu Hsi's philosophy of human relations never went beyond the philosophy of double-dealing and national betrayal since Chu Hsi himself was a typical pretender and Confucian scholar mouthing Confucian virtues but doing every misdeed. He gave lip service to "resistance" but in reality he was associated with the capitulation group in Southern Sung. Lin Piao's emulation of Chu Hsi and his way of "dealing with people" was actually motivated by a desire to conspire and intrigue and become a child-emperor of Soviet revisionist social imperialism.

(4) Li Chih's Honor-Legalism and Oppose-Confucianism Thinking

Despite attempts by the big landlord class to tighten their reactionary rule since the Southern Sung period, the vast numbers of the people and some progressive thinkers continued their struggles against Confucianism and the school of reason. Li Chih, a progressive thinker of the landlord class, arose in the latter part of the Ming period to unfurl the banner of honoring Legalism and opposing Confucianism.

Li Chih, bearing the courtesy name Cho Wu, was born in Tsinchiang, Fukien. He had been a minor official for more than 20 years and was therefore familiar with the degeneration, deceit and treachery of Confucian and Mencian devotees. When he hit back he was almost certainly able to hit at Confucianism where it hurt most. He pointed out that Confucius was nothing but a heavy drinker, with no learning at all. The Analects and the Book of Mencius, consisting of incomplete notes taken down by Confucius' and Mencius' disciples and their descendants, were of no value at all. Li Chih not only openly scoffed at Confucian authority but

displayed open contempt for those reactionary Confucian scholars "clad in elegant Confucian garb but who walk like pigs and dogs." Li Chih angrily denounced Chu Hsi's doctrine of principle as "false learning" harmful to people and detrimental to the country. Chu Hsi once spoke approvingly of Confucius by saying, "If Heaven did not produce Chung-ni, the millennia would remain dark as a long night." Li Chih said satirically: If this were true, people before Confucius would have to light the candle when taking a walk in daytime. By strange coincidence, Ch'en Po-ta, an important member of the Lin Piao anti-Party clique, echoed this theme by likening Lin Piao to a "bright lamp" in a "long night." This shows that the decayed and declining classes invariably have to resort to self-deception to get by.

Repudiation of Confucius and the Confucian school was inevitably accompanied by affirmation of Ch'in Shih Huang and the Legalist school. Li Chih dispelled the mist surrounding the misrepresentation and distortion of Ch'in Shih Huang by the reactionary classes in succeeding ages and applauded him as "quite an emperor throughout the ages." This assessment of the historical merit of Ch'in Shih Huang was then considered quite impressive. Li Chih likewise regarded the "burning of books and burying alive of Confucian scholars" as the inevitable outcome of the class struggle at that time, a development arising from the "force of circumstances." He told those stubborn Confucian scholars not to be bitter about Ch'in Shih Huang. Li Chih applauded Emperor Kao-tsu and Emperor Wu of Han but deprecated Emperor Yuan of Han, the former honoring Legalism and the latter worshipping Confucianism. He affirmed all the Legalist figures in history, such as Wu Ch'i, Shang Yang, Shen Pu-hai, Hsün K'uang, Han Fei, Chia I, Ch'ao Ts'o, Sang Hung-yang and Ts'ao Ts'ao. He also praised Liu Tsung-yuan's On Feudalism and Wang An-shih's reform.

Li Chih's anti-Confucius spirit found expression in his opposition to those feudal conventions which singled out men as being superior to women. His disavowal of the intellectual gap between the sexes was behind his advocacy of equality between man and woman. For instance, he accepted women to be his students and went so far as to encourage them to choose their mates and ignore arranged marriages as had been the prevailing custom in those days. His bold challenge to feudal conventions indeed deserved to be applauded under the historical conditions which prevailed at that time.

Because Li Chih had debunked the reaction and decadence inherent in the Confucian school, he was bitterly resented by the big landlord class. The latter cursed him, calling him an "arch heretic." They even wanted to expel him and put him to death. When Li Chih reached the advanced age of 76, he was eventually imprisoned. Subsequently he died of persecution.

After Li Chih's death, the reactionary school of reason became increasingly rampant. Eventually the Ming dynasty was toppled by a major peasant uprising which erupted in the last year of the Ming period. With the advent of the Ch'ing dynasty, a number of thinkers and statesmen of the landlord class arose to honor Legalism and oppose Confucianism. Wang Fu-chih, for instance, was in favor of the prefectural system instituted by

Ch'in Shih Huang. He was likewise opposed to the school of reason which flourished during the Sung and Ming periods. Before and after the Opium War, Kung Tzu-chen, a reformist of the landlord class, became so disenchanted with the Ch'ing government that he did not hesitate to call for reform. He wrote a poem alluding to a wind of change that would turn the tide and alter the murky political situation. This foreshadowed a turn of events fraught with epochal significance. China had since entered into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society to usher in the stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution. This group mounted the historical stage after it assumed the revolutionary posture of honoring Legalism and opposing Confucianism, with its prominent representative Chang T'ai-yen having criticized Confucius and defended Ch'in Shih Huang's action in burning books and burying Confucian scholars alive. He applauded Ch'in Shih Huang for the purpose of creating public opinion in favor of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

(5) What Does the History of the Confucian-Legalist Struggle Signify?

In looking back at the history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle we can clearly see that the struggle had not ceased through more than two thousand years. Despite the different historical periods when the Confucian-Legalist struggle was characterized by different class content and forms of expression, it reflected in an ideological sense the class struggle at that time. The historical experience of the Confucian-Legalist struggle tells us that Confucian attempts at restoration, retrogression, divisions and secession, national betrayal and capitulation represented the reactionary forces in the ideological context, while the Legalists kept to reform and advance, advocating unification and solidarity and opposing invasions from outside. These were two radically antagonistic political lines. Similarly, they were diametrically opposed to one another in ideology and in the line. The Confucian school invariably upholds the idealist "concept of Heaven's will" and "theory of transcendentalism" and preaches the retrogressive concept of history of "following the examples of early kings." Therefore Confucianists are all Heaven worshippers while the Legalists are materialists who disavow the theory of "Heavenly mandate" and believe in "man's determination as being superior to Heaven's appointment." They reject the theory of "innate genius" and hold that ability is acquired by an accumulation of learning. The Legalists therefore laud the present and disparage the past; they are firm believers in the concept of evolution of history expressed in the principle of "following the examples of later kings." This shows that the ideology and political line of the Legalist school is in accord with the general trend in the development of history. On the other hand, the ideology and political line of the Confucian school runs counter to the general trend in the development of history and the interests of the people. This seals the inevitable doom of the Confucian school.

In view of class and historical limitations, it is natural for Legalist representatives to lose their grip on dialectical and historical materialism. This is because their world outlook is still tainted with

the metaphysical and idealist conception of history. We should make a class analysis of the historical role of the Legalist school with the Marxist stand, viewpoint and method. We should pay attention to the study of the relationship between slave uprisings, peasant revolutions and the Confucian-Legalist struggle. It should be noted that the slaves are the makers of history. Since the Legalists represented the landlord class, they persisted in the dictatorship of the exploiting classes. We should appropriately evaluate the role of Legalist representatives by affirming their progressiveness and identify their class and historical limitations. We affirm the Legalist school to "give history a definite scientific place, to respect the development of historical dialectics, not to laud the past and disparage the present nor to commend any feudal toxin. As to the masses of the people and young students, the main thing is not to lead them into looking back but to guide them to look forward."

Historical experience also tells us that despite the Legalist school's sharp criticism of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, it would not be possible for the Legalists to completely strike down the Confucian junk shop. This will inevitably be the historical mission of the proletariat. Only by employing the scientific weapon of Marxism, Leninism and Mao Tsetung thought can we more vigorously, penetratingly and correctly repudiate the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. And only by bringing out the reactionary essence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius on the plane of the class and line struggles can we arrive at a relatively comprehensive scientific conclusion regarding historical phenomena, including the history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle.

Half a century has elapsed since the advent of the May 4 Movement. But the honor-Confucius and oppose-Confucius struggle is far from over. Since the founding of the Chinese Communist Party there have been ten major line struggles. The chieftains of successive opportunist lines all worshipped Confucius. Ch'en Tu-hsiu once called for "reassessing the worth of Confucius." Wang Ming extolled the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and spoke of them as the "fine tradition of the Chinese nation." More than once Liu Shao-ch'i dished up his sinister On Self-Cultivation which peddles the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, while Ch'en Po-ta exalted Confucius and equated him with other "great men" on earth. Lin Piao on the other hand was an out-and-out Confucian devotee. He used the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius as a reactionary ideological weapon to usurp Party power and restore capitalism. In the great practice of leading the new democratic revolution and socialist revolution over the past 50 years, great leader Chairman Mao has invariably combined the criticism of opportunist lines with the repudiation of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. His brilliant treatises in criticism of Confucius in the course of prolonged revolutionary struggles constitute a summation of the experience in successive criticize-Confucius struggles. These writings indicate the direction for the current movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius.

Chairman Mao has pointed out: "Overthrowing the old social system and establishing a new social system, that is, the socialist system, involves

a great struggle, a big change in social system and the mutual relations between men." The proletarian revolution aims at eliminating on the globe the system of exploiting man by man, so the whole of mankind may be emancipated. This is bound to be frantically resisted by the reactionaries who are vainly trying to roll the wheel of history back. They will certainly employ the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and engage the proletariat in a trial of strength over a long period of time. Therefore, as long as classes and class struggle exist, there will be revisionism, Confucian devotees and the honor-Confucius and oppose-Confucius struggle. Opposing and combating revisionism and repudiating the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius is a long-term fighting task. We must be spiritually prepared for protracted fighting. We must use Marxist stand, viewpoint and method to conscientiously sum up the historical experience of the Confucian-Legalist struggle, study Legalist works, clearly identify the class substance of the Confucian-Legalist struggle, and penetratingly and in a sustained manner develop the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. Let us accomplish the great historical mission of "overthrowing the Confucian shop" and struggle for the consolidation of proletarian dictatorship!

(This section was jointly written by Wang Kuo-jung, worker of Shanghai Construction Machinery Manufacturing Plant; Wang Ssu-yü, worker of Ch'ien-chin Farm; Hu Shen-sheng, worker of Shanghai Work Tool Plant; and Ts'ai Che, worker of Zone No. 5, Shanghai Harbor)

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On Anti-Confucian Thinking in Lu Hsün's Novels

by

Shen Yüeh (申越)

(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an [Study and Criticism], No. 8, August 20, 1974)

The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius were fiercely and extensively castigated by Lu Hsün, a giant in the Chinese cultural revolution. Many of his novels are like heavy bombs thrown at the Confucian junk shop, shining with militant anti-Confucius luster.

A Madman's Diary, the first novel written in the vernacular in the history of modern Chinese literature, was Lu Hsün's first shot directed at Confucius. The novel appeared on the eve of the revolutionary tide of the May 4 Movement, along with the slogan "Down with the Confucian shop." The gathering clouds of worshipping Confucius and restoring the old order were then blanketing all of China. The farces put on by Yüan Shih-k'ai, who was aspiring to the imperial throne, and by Chang Hsun, a restorationist, paved the way for clamorous utterances advocating worshipping Confucius and exalting Confucianism, reading the Classics and restoring the old order. Public pronouncements by both Yüan Shih-k'ai and Chang Hsün called for honoring of Confucius. These were echoed by feudal-minded diehards who clamored for greater attention to Confucian teachings. The oppressive predominance of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius among the thinkers of the day, however, was broken by the revolutionary torrent of the May 4 Movement which issued the "Down with the Confucian shop" slogan. This punctured the two-thousand-year old superstitious belief in the Confucian junk shop and ushered in a crushing criticize-Confucius struggle led by the proletariat. In this mighty struggle Lu Hsün from beginning to end stood in the forefront, becoming "the greatest and most courageous standard-bearer" of the new cultural force of the proletariat. From the victory of the October Revolution he saw the "dawn" that was breaking on the mankind of the 20th century and issued a militant Outcry in criticism of the Confucian shop. After the Chinese working class mounted the political stage he was greatly inspired by their independent action. Closely conforming to the needs of developing the new democratic revolution in a deep-going way and unremittingly exposing and repudiating reactionary Confucian teachings, he wrote a number of militant essays and novels.

Lu Hsün's anti-Confucian novels were linked with the actual class struggle. He was always assiduous in the study of the characteristics of the prevailing class and line struggles, incisively and pertinently posing questions that dealt with the honor-Confucius and oppose-Confucius struggle.

On the question of whether the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius embody the ways of the sages or man-eating conventions, Lu Hsün's novels tear apart the sacred halos of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and bring out their reactionary nature. Among groups honoring Confucius and favoring a return to the old order during the "May 4" period, one group

which called for the "preservation of the national characteristics par excellence" extolled the utterly decadent doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to the skies. In the eyes of this group, this "national characteristics" could be the exclusive treasure of one country, without peer in the world. Thus, amid the clamor for the preservation of the "national characteristics" exalted and embellished out of its true proportions, Confucius as the sage of all the sages in ancient times was idolized. A staunch fighter going against the tide, Lu Hsün brought out from numerous aspects the man-eating essence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. All of A Madman's Diary "is replete with courage and a sense of integrity." It questions the "appropriateness" of regarding the decadent conventions eating people day after day and year after year for thousands of years as "they have always been like that." This thunderous voice shakes the very foundations of feudal conventions. The "madman" portrayed in the novel, persecuted by feudal conventions, is actually a dauntless fighter opposed to the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. Listen to his denunciation: "In ancient times people often ate human beings.... I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology, and each page bears the words: 'virtue and morality.' Since I could not sleep anyway, I read carefully half the night, until I began to see words between the lines, the whole book being filled with the two words--'Eat people'." These words were indeed well put. They revealed the ferocious nature of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius which had dominated China for more than two thousand years.

In other novels by Lu Hsün, the vicious, man-eating essence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius has been brought out from different angles. The host of characters depicted in Lu Hsün's novels, like Chao, Ku Chiu, old Mr. Chao, old Mr. Chien, Ting, Lu and Ho Tao-tung, etc., are "man-eaters" who open their mouths wide and show their teeth to devour people, despite their different features and stations in life. Some of them are pale-faced and have protruding teeth, some put on an august appearance. But they are after people and eat them, "devouring" the exploited and oppressed working people, such as Shan Ssu's wife, Hsiao Pao, Yun Tu, Hsiang Lin's wife. They are also after intellectuals of different types such as Chüan Sheng, Tzu Chun and K'ung I-chi. Even within the reactionary ruling class itself, there are the big eating the small and the strong devouring the weak, with one guarding himself from being "eaten up" by another. Feudal conventions every day preside over these "man-eating" feasts, vainly trying to carry on the banqueting all the time. Such feasting is very much in evidence but the secret has never been let out. "Whoever says so is making a mistake." This stifling secret was laid bare by Lu Hsün who rose to the occasion and issued a resounding Outcry. Sternly warning the "man-eaters," Lu Hsün said: "You should know that man-eaters will not be tolerated in the future...." He also penetratingly pointed out: Before the coming of this "future, all those who have been harmed by the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and feudal conventions should "wake up" and "need not look back," refraining from "longing" for a false sense of "peace and prosperity" as the school advocating a return to the old order has. Instead, they should act in a down-to-earth manner and "sweep away these man-eaters, clean out this feast and wreck this kitchen," in a determined effort to smash the spiritual fetters imposed by the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius!

Were Confucius and Mencius after all "sages" or swindlers? While revealing the man-eating essence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, Lu Hsün's novels also vividly and graphically portray the utter hypocrisy and hideous features of Confucian and Mencian devotees. As man-eaters, they do their best to cover up their vicious features, greeting people with their "smiling" masks. These man-eating devils disguised as human beings know how to strike different poses before different types of people--"as ferocious as a lion" before the weak and "as timid as a rabbit" before the powerful adversary. But when they beat a retreat, they are "as cunning as a fox." After they have eaten people, they leave neither bones nor blood. They even shed tears to show their "compassion." Lu Hsün pointed out incisively: "I never believe that those defenders of the national characteristics or morality are real when they cry bitterly and even if their eyes are filled with tears it is necessary to check their handkerchiefs to see if these have been immersed in peppery water or ginger juice."

Lu Hsün's novels portray different types of hypocrites that exemplify Confucian and Mencian devotees. In The New Year's Sacrifice aren't Confucian classics and couplets quoting wise sayings displayed in Lu Ssu's study? Whoever thinks that Lu Ssu is a generous and kind-hearted Buddhist devotee will be sadly disappointed. For when Hsiang Lin's wife who has been spiritually and physically tormented eventually loses her labor power, she is kicked out by Lu Ssu, who leaves her in the street to go begging and to die of cold and hunger. Lu Ssu has not the least "sympathy" for her. Instead, he curses her for having died on the day of "blessing," which would mean bad luck for him. Is there any trace of compassion and "love of people"? The deceit of Lu Ssu's wife is equally revolting. After she heard Hsiang Lin's wife relate the tragic story of Ah Mao, her "eyes appear reddish." Does this mean that she will be merciful? No, she is only acting to deceive people. Once Hsiang Lin's wife no longer is able to be at her beck and call, her tears and mercy all vanish without leaving any trace. Lu Ssu and his wife are like the kind of people who hold pliant knives in their hands but disguise their devilish nature with lofty sounding phrases taken from Confucian classics. In Lu Hsün's other novels we may also find different types of pretenders. In The True Story of Ah Q, for instance, that sham foreign devil who holds a stick all day long is in reality a double-dealer posing as a revolutionist but putting down the revolution. That sham Confucianist Ssu Ming in Soap is in reality a dyed-in-the-wool scoundrel mouthing Confucian virtues. One of the characters of Divorce who poses as the only person who has mastered the Doctrine of the Mean secretly conspires with a feudal landlord family in persecuting a peasant woman named Ai Ku. In collusion with the evil forces, Ssu Yeh of The Long Burning Lamp looks upon his nephew as a "lunatic" and forcibly locks him up in an empty room in the temple. He does so for the purpose of seizing his nephew's house. Lu Hsün used his pen like a sharp-edged sword to disgorge all the filthiest things from the depths of the souls of Confucian and Mencian devotees. By contrasting "perfunctoriness, living ignobly, flattery, abuse of power, selfishness" as reflected in their inner world with their outward disguises such as "the fine name of justice and integrity, the labels of an upright gentleman,

false pretense to kindliness and honesty, and a subtle language," people will find out how utterly deceitful, mean and wicked these Confucian and Mencian devotees were!

With the deepening of the honor-Confucius and oppose-Confucius struggle, the ranks on the entire ideological front were split. After the May 4 Movement the reactionary ruling class used both the pen and the gun to step up their "encirclement and suppression" of the new cultural movement. At this crucial moment many who had previously opposed Confucian ideals were routed and dispersed. Hu Shih, representing the rightwing bourgeoisie, was the first to display the white flag. He clamored for "putting the national heritage in order," vainly trying to use the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to stem the spread of Marxism in China. Quite a few who had previously acquitted themselves well in criticizing Confucius made an aboutface turn and joined the honor-Confucius group. After having penetratingly studied the lessons drawn from the splitting and regrouping of the ranks of the new cultural movement, Lu Hsün absorbed these experiences and incorporated them into the novels he wrote during this period. In the Wine Shop, The Forlorn, Regret for the Past and other novels succinctly reveal a great truth: there is no way out in turning back. For instance, Lu Wei-fu once did pursue his ideal and had accomplished something during the May 4 Movement period. But he turned back when he was caught in the whirl of a vicious restorationist torrent. Like a fly making a circle, he went back to where he had started. Wei Lien-shu, for another instance, had challenged the old world order. But after fighting a few rounds and meeting a number of setbacks, he eventually lost heart and bowed to what he had previously detested and opposed. Both Tzu Chun and Chüan Sheng at the outset displayed great courage in making a clean break with their respective feudal families for the sake of their own emancipation and in championing freedom of marriage. But finally Tzu Chun again returned to his own old family. These intellectuals vacillated where once they were firm, became cowardly where once they were so brave, turned back when they should advance, and turned back from the revolutionary road to become a non-revolutionary or even a counter-revolutionary. A clear line of demarcation is that they previously opposed Confucius, then did nothing about opposing Confucius and finally worshipped Confucius.

This manifested itself among the revolutionary ranks during the May 4 Movement period, a phenomenon which was exemplified in a number of ways. When the revolution was deepening, the revolutionary ranks also underwent changes. Because of different ultimate aims, when the contingent was advancing "some people would drop out, some would take to the wilderness, some would lose their spirit, some would revolt; but as long as this would not hamper the advance, the contingent would eventually become a pure and crack detachment." The tragedy of those who turned back tells people by negative example that a truly anti-Confucius fighter must advance with the revolution and must be strict in dissecting himself. One important reason why Lu Hsün was able to carry on in his fighting like a sturdy pine standing firm in the raging storm, despite the adverse current of honoring Confucius and returning to the old order which was sweeping the whole country, was that he lived for the revolution and

consciously placed himself under the Party's leadership. Furthermore, he gradually tempered himself into becoming a great Marxist through participation in the actual struggle and study of Marxism.

From another aspect the novels by Lu Hsün reflect his fighting course in criticizing Confucius. One of his collected works, Outcry was written during the May 4 Movement period and not long after the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. His other novel, Indecision, was completed in the initial stages of the First Revolutionary Civil War. These two different stages of the criticize-Confucius struggle affected Lu Hsün's writing differently. The development of the Chinese people's revolutionary struggles gave Lu Hsün a great impetus for understanding the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. The anti-Confucius ideology of Lu Hsün's novels during this period was more profound than that of the Outcry period. By comparing Kung I-chi with The New Year's Sacrifice, the former was published in 1919 and the latter in 1924, we find that the principal characters of both novels are victims of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, but the social significance of the two different victims, Kung I-chi and Hsiang Lin's wife, is far from similar. While Kung I-chi merely reflects the antagonism between the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and intellectuals in the lower strata, The New Year's Sacrifice brings out the antagonism between the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and the working people. Kung I-chi depicts the harm of the Confucian preaching "Study well to become official" to a poor Confucian scholar. The New Year's Sacrifice on the other hand dwells on the persecution of the working people by the feudal patriarchal system and ideology. Kung I-chi as a victim accepts what befalls him without complaint, while Hsiang Lin's wife exemplifies a working woman with certain manifestations of the rebellious spirit. The characterization of Kung I-chi and Hsiang Lin's wife does not merely involve changes in portraying characters. What is particularly important is Lu Hsün's greatly enhanced understanding of the reactionary and harmful nature of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. Only when he came to realize the need to smash the spiritual fetters imposed by the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius on the laboring people would it have been possible for him to choose Hsiang Lin's wife, a suffering working woman, as the principal character in his novel. And only then was the social cause of the tragedy involving Hsiang Lin's wife revealed. This enabled Lu Hsün to arouse the people to fight for their own emancipation!

The novels written by Lu Hsün during these priods merely marked the starting point of his lifelong involvement in the anti-Confucius struggle. If it is said that in his anti-Confucius novels, Lu Hsün, a revolutionary democrat, had not obtained and could not possibly and completely obtain Marxist conclusions, he did accomplish this mission in his essays published at a later period when he became a Marxist. During this period his essays were strongly critical of Confucius, hitting where it hurt the most. This is because he had not stopped repudiating Confucius and Mencius with revolutionary democratic ideas. Rather, guided by Marxism he raised his criticisms to a new high level and thus obtained new achievements. For instance, in his essay Confucius in Modern China Lu Hsün's portrayal of

Confucius has reached the Marxist level. He pointed out: Confucius "was the sage of those in power or those anxious to take power, a sage having nothing to do with the common people." Lu Hsün admitted that "Confucius devised outstanding methods of governing the state, but these were thought up to rule the people for the sake of those in authority; there was nothing of any value to the people." These portrayals of Confucius with the Marxist class viewpoint were most penetrating, all-round, vigorous. In his essays written in a later period, for another instance, Lu Hsün clearly told us: The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius serve as the approach to restoration and national betrayal and they were used by all reactionary classes seeking restoration and turning back as "bricks to knock on doors." All reactionaries and their "foreign masters" attempted to use Confucius as a "brick" to knock at other "doors of happiness." It was indeed a great flying leap for Lu Hsün to oppose Confucius from being a revolutionary democrat to being a Marxist. This shows that only by having a good grasp of Marxism as a theoretical weapon can we completely defeat the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

Chairman Mao has said, "Lu Hsün was the main fighter in the Chinese cultural revolution. He was not only a great man of letters but a great thinker and a great revolutionary." Lu Hsün 's novels are fighting tools subordinate to the revolution, serving the revolution very well. As to their historical position and historical role in the Chinese revolution, we view them in this way. In the long course of Chinese history the Confucian-Legalist struggle lasted for more than two thousand years, a reflection of the class struggle. In the history about the development of Chinese literature quite a number of people used poetry, songs, ballads, dramas and novels to honor Confucius and extol Confucianism, while progressive men of letters and thinkers used them to oppose Confucius and repudiate Confucianism. Literary works honoring Confucius and opposing him exist and develop in the course of comparing with one another and struggling against each other. In studying the history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle and the history of class struggle as a whole, we should study them alongside those literary works by progressive men of letters and thinkers that are opposed to Confucianism. In modern and contemporary history of Chinese literature Lu Hsün's anti-Confucius novels combine the two approaches admirably well, whether they are viewed politically or artistically. We therefore should read Lu Hsün's novels and his essays in the same breadth as in our study of the history of Chinese literature and the history of the Confucian-Legalist struggle. This is of great benefit to the summation of the historical experience of class struggle in the service of the class and line struggles.

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Comment on San-kuo Yen-i's Honor-Confucius and Anti-Legalist Ideology

by

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(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an [Study and Criticism], No. 8, August 20, 1974)

San-kuo Yen-i* (hereafter San-kuo), a famous historical novel of ancient China, is particularly enlightening in that it helps us understand class struggle and the internal struggle of the landlord class in feudal society and discern the essence of the exploiting classes as well as their cunning and sinister tactics. However, the work contains marked honor-Confucius and anti-Legalist notions. This reactionary ideology has long been applauded by literary critics. It is therefore necessary to initiate further discussions of this question.

I

San-kuo's honor-Confucius and anti-Legalist ideology finds expression first of all in the portrayal of Ts'ao Ts'ao.

Ts'ao Ts'ao is depicted as a villain in the novel. The author not only deletes those historical data that could truthfully throw light on Ts'ao Ts'ao's life and draws on those chronicles that slander and vilify him but fabricates numerous non-existent episodes to attack Ts'ao Ts'ao. For instance, Ts'ao Ts'ao kills a member of Lu Po-she's family because Lu's son has gathered a number of people to rob Ts'ao Ts'ao of his baggage and horses. For self-defense purposes Ts'ao Ts'ao "killed several people." Later historians such as Sun Sheng and other Confucianists accused a suspicious Ts'ao Ts'ao of having killed a member of Lu Po-she's family. However, even in such material slandering Ts'ao Ts'ao there is no record alleging that Ts'ao Ts'ao killed Lu Po-she. San-kuo is not only based on such false charges but makes up an episode in which Ts'ao Ts'ao kills Lu Po-she after finding out that he has slain the wrong person. In addition, the work contains distortions and fabrications that depart quite far from historical facts, such as Ts'ao Ts'ao kills Wang Hou, a warehouse supervisor, takes a woman named Tsou as his wife, goes hunting at Hsutien and his relations with Chen Kung. "There is no such thing in the world as love and hatred without reason." In deliberately vilifying Ts'ao Ts'ao and accusing him of being cunning, treacherous, sinister and extremely fierce and brutal, the work naturally has its reasons. Apart from denouncing Ts'ao Ts'ao as "deceiving the

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* "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" (三国演义).

ruler" "impudent" and "not benevolent" through the lips of Hsu's mother, K'ung Jung and others, the author directly condemns him as "Ts'ao the thief" who "deceives the ruler." This clearly shows that the author's bitterness about Ts'ao Ts'ao stems, in his view, from Ts'ao's violation of the "relations between the ruler and his ministers" in contravention of the "rules of propriety" preached by the Confucianists.

Among the host of charges against Ts'ao Ts'ao fabricated in the novel San-kuo the killing of Tung Cheng and others by Ts'ao Ts'ao is deemed by the author as serious an offense as "deceiving the ruler." Before the incident involving the killing of Tung Cheng, there is no mention in the work of Ts'ao Ts'ao having "deceived the ruler" nor any reference to him as being the "thief." The novel speaks approvingly of Ts'ao Ts'ao for his participation in the suppression of the Yellow Turban uprising and applauds him as being a "fine hero." However, since the Tung Cheng affair the author has incessantly abused Ts'ao Ts'ao and portrayed him as a villain. In other episodes in which Ts'ao Ts'ao is vilified, the novel does not invoke the author to make the comment. But if similar incidents are involved, the author does not hesitate to attack Ts'ao Ts'ao direct. In commenting on Ts'ao Ts'ao's killing of the family of Fu Wan, for instance, the author regards this act as culminating in a long series of wrongdoings in his lifetime. This shows that these episodes provide the focal point for the novel to attack Ts'ao Ts'ao and to set the tune for his characterization. Other portrayals merely supplement the vilification of Ts'ao Ts'ao and identify him as a "thief" who "deceives the ruler." This brings out for the readers the villainy that is in Ts'ao Ts'ao and shows how the author has gone the length of upholding the "rules of propriety" and the "relations" between the ruler and his ministers.

This therefore calls for a further look into these focal episodes.

After Ts'ao Ts'ao has defeated Yuan Shu and eliminated Lu Pu, the narrative recounts, he harbors the ambition of establishing himself as one who "predominates." He accompanies Emperor Hsien of Han and his entourage to Hsutien for hunting. When the group of senior ministers cheer the emperor and "shouted wan shui* in unison," Ts'ao Ts'ao stands before the emperor and accepts the cheering. He does so to find out the reaction of the high officials waiting on the emperor. In the belief that Ts'ao Ts'ao will certainly seize the empire, the emperor asks an emissary to deliver a confidential decree to his uncle, Tung Cheng, with a request that Ts'ao Ts'ao be removed. Tung Cheng consults Wang Tzu-fu and Wu Tzu-lan and "vowed to kill the thief." However, the plot is foiled by Ts'ao Ts'ao who puts Tung and other accomplices to death. The killing of these "loyal and upright" people arouses the compassion of many but Ts'ao Ts'ao takes advantage of the incident to get rid of the dissidents and implicate the innocent. Before and after the incident he slaughters "more than a thousand people." "Since then officials inside and outside the capital dared not talk to each other in whispers." Subsequent attempts by the family of Fu Wan and Keng Chi and others to kill Ts'ao Ts'ao are unsuccessful and these opponents are one after another put to death by Ts'ao Ts'ao. In depicting these episodes the novel does

* Long live.

its best to embellish Tung Cheng and company, applauding them as "loyal ministers and upright men" having the support of the people and accusing Ts'ao Ts'ao of being a ruthless and sinister careerist and conspirator. This vilification of Legalist Ts'ao Ts'ao is entirely based on Confucian concepts.

In history Tung Cheng and Wang Tzu-fu were indeed sworn partners and the two vainly attempted to murder Ts'ao Ts'ao. The novel, however, contains episodes that are clearly at variance with the chronicles of history. After the Yellow Turban uprising was put down by the Eastern Han royal court, reactionary families and powerful clans made further efforts to expand their influence. They not only dominated the central government but used their military powers to create a state of division and secession among the principalities. The secessionist forces led by the powerful clans fought among themselves in succeeding years and this caused serious damage to production. This retrograde step ran counter to the needs of social development. As a statesman coming of a powerful landlord clan, Ts'ao Ts'ao fought against powerful landlords on the basis of Legalist concepts and replaced them as the dominant force in the central government of Eastern Han. With the final and total elimination of the secessionist forces in the north and in the Central Plain, Ts'ao Ts'ao played a constructive role in his opposition to divisions and toward upholding the cause of unification. It was in this process that powerful landlords hit back in a frenzy. Tung Cheng and his kind were their representatives.

Tung Cheng, nephew of Emperor Ling's mother and father-in-law of Emperor Hsien of Han, was a typical scion of families which for generations were descendants of powerful clans. When Ts'ao Ts'ao was ready to eliminate the Yuan Shao clique, then the most powerful secessionist forces representing mighty and influential clans after he had defeated Yuan Shu and Lu Pu and occupied a leading position in the central government of Eastern Han, Tung Cheng lost his patience. Pretending that he had been secretly entrusted by Emperor Hsien of Han to kill Ts'ao Ts'ao ("He declined to accept a confidential imperial edict about removing Ts'ao Kung." -- (San Kuo Chih, Shu Shu, Biography of the Former Emperor), he conspired with Wang Tzu-fu and others to restore the rule of powerful clans and landlords in the royal court. He told his confederates, "Previously Lu Pu-wei's door was made higher because of Tzu Ch'u. We are now in a similar situation." What a marvellous confession this was. During the Warring States period Lu Pu-wei took advantage of his close ties with Ch'in Prince Tzu Ch'u to carry out restoration in a big way in the state of Ch'in. Tung Cheng likewise sought to make use of his close relations with his son-in-law Emperor Hsien and followed the same old road to restoration taken by Lu Pu-wei. He was therefore no better than Lu Pu-wei in being a careerist, conspirator and maniac for restoration. If their plot was successful the powerful clans and landlords would have dominated the central government of Eastern Han. This would have disrupted Ts'ao Ts'ao's plan to uproot the secessionist forces led by the powerful clans and aggravated the divisions and turmoil. Therefore, in struggling against them Ts'ao Ts'ao was involved in a struggle

between retrogression and counter-retrogression and at the same time one between the Confucian and Legalist schools. Carrying the banner of accepting Emperor Hsien's confidential decree, Tung Cheng and his band used the Confucian "relations between the ruler and his ministers" to repress Ts'ao Ts'ao. The latter on the other hand "invoked the Legalist practice of Shen and Shang" to put down the group of conspirators. Accordingly, "Tung Sheng and others were executed because their plot was foiled." (San Kuo Chih, Wei Shu: Chronicle of Emperor Wu) To put these people to death was justified.

The powerful clans and landlords, however, did not give up. After Tung Cheng and his confederates were defeated, the powerful landlord family of Fu Wan plotted another murder attempt. They continued to use the "relations between the ruler and his ministers" as an ideological weapon against Ts'ao Ts'ao, creating reactionary public opinion in the name of Emperor Hsien and vainly trying to use this as a pretext for carrying out a coup. Subsequently, Keng Chi, Wei Huang and other powerful families rallied a handful of people to start an armed rebellion, continuing to use the "relations between the ruler and his ministers" as a trump card and "gathering behind the emperor to attack Wei" under the pretext of restoring the House of Han.

Ts'ao Ts'ao was severe in suppressing Fu Wan and Keng Chi and incisive in refuting the attacks hurled by the powerful clans and landlords who used the Confucian ideology as their weapon. He declared he would never relinquish his office in the royal court despite slanderous gossip spread by those who were against him and attacked him for violating the "relations between the ruler and his ministers." This, Ts'ao Ts'ao said, would not only do him harm but would accelerate the divisions and "endanger the state." Therefore, he steered clear of "aspiring to vain titles but placing oneself in real jeopardy." The "vain titles" referred to here means the Confucian interpretation of "names and appelations" while opposition to "aspiring to vain titles" is in accord with the consistent Legalist practice and belief expounded by the same token in Shang Chun Shu and Han Fei Tzu. This shows that between Ts'ao Ts'ao and the powerful landlords there was from beginning to end a struggle between retrogression and counter-retrogression, a contention in an ideological sense between the Confucian and Legalist schools.

By contrasting historical truths with the fictitious episodes described in San-kuo, we can understand how the narrative has perverted history. This has obliterated the reactionary essence of the Tung Cheng clique in following the old restorationist road taken by Lu Pu-wei by fabricating episodes that embellish Tung Cheng and his confederates but vilify Ts'ao Ts'ao. Fictitious episodes that vilify Ts'ao Ts'ao, such as those cited in the foregoing paragraphs, are not recorded in official history. These fabrications turn the reactionary Tung Cheng and his kind who clung desperately to threadbare Confucian teaching into persons of rectitude and integrity applauded by the people and make Ts'ao Ts'ao, who adhered to Legalist concepts and played a progressive role in history, a ruthless and vicious careerist and conspirator. What a perversion of right and wrong this is.

San-kuo's fictitious portrayal of Ts'ao Ts'ao, which savors of perversion of history, marks a departure from a typical historical novel's revelation of the ferocious nature of the feudal ruling classes. Rather, the narrative becomes a tool for preaching reactionary Confucian ideology. The vicious nature of the landlord class found concentrated expression in its exploitation and oppression of the people. Yet about Ts'ao Ts'ao's participation in the suppression of the Yellow Turban uprising, an episode which more than anything else in Ts'ao Ts'ao's lifetime should have been taken to task, the novel instead heaps praise on him and calls him a "fine hero." This is clearly in accord with attempts to embellish the brutality of the feudal ruling classes in suppressing the people and to trumpet Confucian ideology. The novel's vilification of Ts'ao Ts'ao thus makes its reactionary nature most apparent. This begins with the narrative's fabrication of Ts'ao Ts'ao's murder of Lu Po-she and his family, with the castigations becoming fiercer and in a more concentrated form after the conspiracy of the Tung Cheng clique comes into the open. For instance, when Ts'ao Ts'ao is falsely accused of having suppressed the Tung Cheng clique, he orders that Chi Ping's ten fingers -- his tongue as well -- be cut off. When Ts'ao Ts'ao is suppressing Keng Chi and Wei Huang, he avails himself of the opportunity to slaughter "more than three hundred" innocent officials. The novel then makes this emphatic comment: The reason why Ts'ao Ts'ao kills Lu Po-she is that he is "neither righteous nor benevolent." In other words, he violates the Confucian dogma of "restraining oneself and returning to propriety." That is why he becomes more ruthless, treacherous and tricky after the Tung Cheng affair. By then he has become a "rebellious minister and scoundrel" because he has completely renounced the Confucian "rules of propriety" and the "relations between the ruler and his ministers." The novel also clearly points out: The people throughout the "empire" at that time bitterly detested Ts'ao Ts'ao precisely because he had trampled under foot the Confucian moral code. In the words of Chi Ping, a "positive character" in the narrative, "You are a thief who deceives the sovereign and misleads him. Who in the empire doesn't want to kill you?" The message implicit in the work is clear to all: Any departure from the Confucian "rules of propriety" and "names and relations" will make one drift into "ruthlessness and treachery" and degenerate into the public enemy of the "empire." What it means is that he will become the public enemy of restorationist and retrogressive forces. This is in praise of the Confucian teaching and there is nothing in it that reflects the vicious and treacherous nature of the feudal ruling classes. In an ideological sense the novel's portrayal of Ts'ao Ts'ao is specifically designed to malign Legalist Ts'ao Ts'ao in history and applaud the reactionary Tung Cheng group. By trumpeting Confucian ethics and morality, the work fully embodies the ideology of honoring Confucianism and opposing Legalism.

II

Another prominent aspect of San-kuo's honor-Confucian and oppose-Legalist ideology is its portrayal of Liu Pei.

In the novel Liu Pei is characterized as a Confucian devotee, an incarnation of "benevolence" trumpeted by the Confucianists. He incessantly quotes from Confucian and Mencian sayings and declares time and again that he "practices benevolence and righteousness toward all." To confirm that Liu Pei does what he avows to do, the author praises Liu Pei's "benevolence" through the lips of many so-called "upright men" and persons known for their integrity, such as K'ung Jung, Hsu Shu and Hsu's mother. In a word, Liu Pei is portrayed in the novel as a downright "benevolent person."

According to the narrative, Liu Pei's "benevolence" primarily embodies Confucian ideals and basic principles that uphold the "rulers should be rulers and ministers ministers" and his dedication to the cause of uprooting those "rebellious ministers and thieves" who "overstep their proper ranks." This "benevolence" manifests itself in his daily life, as a yardstick for his conduct and behavior. Before becoming an official he and Kuan Yu and Chang Fei saved the life of Tung Cho. The latter, a man of no mean importance in officialdom, treated Liu Pei with undisguised arrogance. Chang Fei was furious and wanted to kill Tung Cho. He was stopped by Liu Pei who chided him, saying: "We are all commoners but he is a high official in the imperial court. If you kill him you will start a revolt!" When later Liu Pei became a county magistrate, his superior was so rude to him that "both Kuan and Chang burst with rage." But Liu Pei was duly respectful to his superior so he "acquiesced and withdrew." In order to conform to the Confucian ritual prescribing distinctions between "the high and the low, noble and base," he could accept being humiliated by reactionary officials without complaint and oppose "transgression of ritual" in any form. The novel's portrayal of Liu Pei is therefore permeated with the decadent ideology of "restraining oneself and returning to propriety."

Furthermore, the novel depicts Liu Pei as a "benign and beneficent" "savior" on the basis of Confucius' deceitful preaching that "a benevolent person loves all people." The novel tells people that because Liu Pei does things according to the Confucian ritual and "rules of propriety," he is capable of bringing boon and benefaction to the people. In time of war he is even more concerned about the suffering of the people. For instance, when he was retreating from Chingchow with Ts'ao Ts'ao's troops pursuing him he was so moved by a large following of weeping and wailing people that he "cried over the misfortune and woe befalling the people and wanted to take his own life by hurling himself into the river." His "compassion" for the people and episodes describing the warm support given him by the people are elaborated at length in the narrative, which carries the author's message that as long as one restrains oneself in accordance with Confucian "benevolence," he will win support of the people. Isn't this an echo of the platitude "Restrain oneself and return to propriety and all will ascribe virtue to him"?

San-kuo purports a gross distortion of history. As recorded in history Liu Pei was a Legalist instead of a Confucian devotee advocating "benevolence and righteousness." After he occupied I-chow his subordinates vehemently debated on the question of how to govern it.

One section advocated enforcement of the Confucian type of "benevolent government," in reality an attempt to "benefit" I-chow's powerful clans and landlords so they could run amuck and annex land as they pleased. The other section was represented by Legalist Chuko Liang, who called for rule by law in order to remedy the uncontrollable situation arising from the manipulation of authority on the part of the powerful clans and landlords. Chuko Liang's views were endorsed without reservations by Liu Pei, who entrusted him with political responsibility for the implementation of the Legalist line based on a "stern penal code." (See San Kuo Chih, Biography of Chuko Liang and Chronicle of Shu)

When Liu Pei was dying he urged his son to attend to the affairs of the state with the Prime Minister (Chuko Liang). In other words, he wished that his son and Chuko Liang would continue to implement the Legalist line. Furthermore, he exhorted his son to study Legalist works such as Shang Chun Shu so he could profit by their writings. The reason why Liu Pei was able to become the founding emperor of the state of Shu and succeeded in unifying Szechwan and Chuankang after his occupation of I-chow -- thus identifying him as having played a progressive role in history -- is that he renounced the Confucian ideal of "benevolent government" and espoused the Legalist line. San-kuo's portrayal of Liu Pei identifying him as a Confucian devotee and associating him with the practice of"benevolence and righteousness" is a fabrication by the author himself, a fictitious account having nothing to do with what Liu Pei actually stood for.

Since Liu Pei was bent on espousing the Legalist line he naturally found himself in conflict with the Confucian teaching. For example, he expelled Liu Chang from I-chow and adopted the Legalist line in place of the Confucian line previously pursued by Liu Chang, an act which was in contravention of the basic Confucian principles. As Inspector of Imperial Troops and Governor of I-chow, Liu Chang's control of I-chow had the imperial sanction and was held inviolable. Expelling him from I-chow would have constituted an act of transgression against imperial decrees. But Liu Pei took no heed of these "basic principles" and "names and relations." He acted with determination. This rebellion against Confucian tradition and authority found expression even in his daily routine. When he was serving as county magistrate, for instance, he ordered his men to give his superior a good beating because the latter had put on pompous airs in front of him, in total disregard of the Confucian differentiation between "the high and the low, noble and base." Thus San-kuo's portrayal of Liu Pei, particularly his servility to Tung Cho and his superior, is a downright fabrication. By producing something out of nothing and confusing black with white, the author presents a grossly distorted image of the Legalist Liu Pei.

Liu Pei's relations with the masses of the people, as depicted in San-kuo, are likewise a distortion of historical truths. Although the Legalists did play a progressive role at that time, they were identified as part of the landlord class. As such, they could not but be obsessed with the notion of exploiting and oppressing the people. In these

circumstances, it would be impossible for them to cherish the people and for the people to cherish them. Take Liu Pei's retreat from Chingchow as an example. "Liu Pei was accompanied by a very large following when he was withdrawing from Chingchow. On reaching Tangyang, he was followed by more than a hundred thousand people, with carriages laden with provisions numbering several thousand." (San Kuo Chih, Biography of the Former Emperor) But it would be wrong to assume that Liu Pei's large following comprised the laboring people as well; they were "scholar-officials" of the landlord class. At that time, according to accounts given in San Kuo Chih, Biography of Liu Pa, elements of the landlord class often were in possession of sizable affiliated population groups, including "clansmen," "guests" and "bondservants." Liu Pei's brother-in-law Mi Chu, for instance, had "ten thousand bondservants" at his beck and call. Wherever they went and settled down, they would take these people with them. It is hardly surprising for the chronicling of "over a hundred thousand people" in San Kuo Chih, considering the fact that the author of the fictional version has gone to great lengths in describing the affiliated population groups as the common people and as evidence of Liu Pei's "benevolence and virtue."

It is apparent therefore that San-kuo's portrayal of Liu Pei is one of turning history upside down. The novel on the one hand misrepresents Legalist Liu Pei as a Confucian devotee upholding "restraining oneself and returning to propriety" and, on the other, goes the length of embellishing this faked Confucian image, such as fabricating the myth "he who is benevolent loves all people" and "all will ascribe virtue to him" and trumpeting the Confucian "benevolent government" and moral virtue. The author quotes Liu Pei as saying: "Ts'ao Ts'ao is my implacable enemy. I counter his ruthlessness with benevolence, his treachery with loyalty." It is abundantly clear that the novel's reference to Liu Pei in laudatory terms is a repudiation of Ts'ao Ts'ao. It contrasts Liu Pei's so-called "tolerance," "benevolence" and "loyalty" with Ts'ao Ts'ao's "impulsiveness," "ruthlessness" and "treachery." Therefore the novel's characterizations of both are closely integrated with one another and are permeated with ideas worshipping the Confucian and opposing the Legalist schools. The difference lies in projecting the image of Ts'ao Ts'ao along the line of crudely repudiating the Legalists and that of Liu Pei more in favor of directly lauding the Confucianists.

However, San-kuo's laudatory references to Liu Pei and Confucianism and deprecation of Ts'ao Ts'ao and Legalism in the same breadth has long been applauded by literary critics. This explains the serious extent of the spread of ideas worshipping Confucianism and opposing Legalism in the study of classical literature. We must therefore take the Party's basic line as the guide and carry the criticize-Lin and criticize-Confucius struggle through to the end!

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